QINGHAI SPECIAL In Search of the Huanghe's Source Epitome of Tibetan Buddhism Three Festivals of Qinghai Qutan Monastery — A Jewel Unknown



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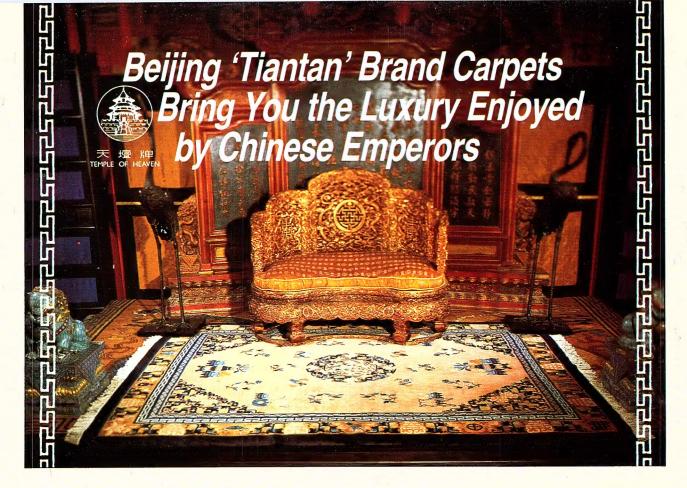
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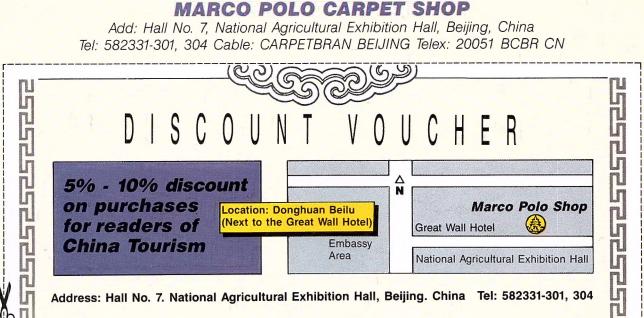


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EDITORIAL

Rugged Country

Not having devoted a special issue to Qinghai Province since it was first opened to tourism in 1985, despite the odd individual article, we are happy to set about remedying this situation.

Qinghai is geographically an extension of the Tibetan Plateau and, except for the areas in the east around Xining, the provincial capital, most of it south of Lake Qinghai — as Amdo — was once subject to Tibetan rule. The human population of about four million seems to take up little space in this enormous province, China's fourth largest, with an area of around 720,000 square kilometres set at an average of 4,000 metres above sealevel. Vast tracts are thus left to the rich wildlife and the occasional nomad group with its yak, sheep, cattle, goats and horses.

It was in the great empty heart of Qinghai north of the Bayanhar Mountains, in an interminable setting of swamps, lakes and flower-studded grasslands, that our reporter undertook the arduous task of seeing for himself the still disputed source of the Huanghe (Yellow River). His journey revealed the beauties



neng Yunfeng

of nature, but also the harsh realities of travel in Qinghai. This remains expedition country. Still, the feeling of being in a place which few people will ever reach, as well as the warmth and friendliness of the isolated communities — of herdsmen, monks, fishermen and gold prospectors — he encountered was some reward.

Despite the emphasis on the Tibetan religion, lifestyle and customs, in the more populous (because lower and more suited to agriculture) east around Xining there are a number of smaller minority groups living in autonomous counties. Here we visit the Salar and the Tu, as well as a gathering of Tibetan nomads on the grassland, to see how they all celebrate their major festivals. Xining is also close to some of Tibetan Buddhism's most imposing religious complexes, including the relatively little-known Qutan Monastery.

The rest of this issue has a markedly southern bias. An area of northern Guangdong which has long been considered an 'ancestral home' by Hakkas living outside China provides insight into the eventful history of these people of Han Chinese stock. And, still in Guangdong, the eastern cities of Chaozhou and Shantou are the base for a local opera form with striking differences from classical Beijing Opera.



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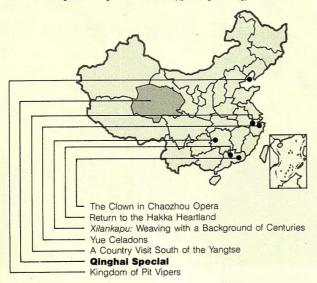
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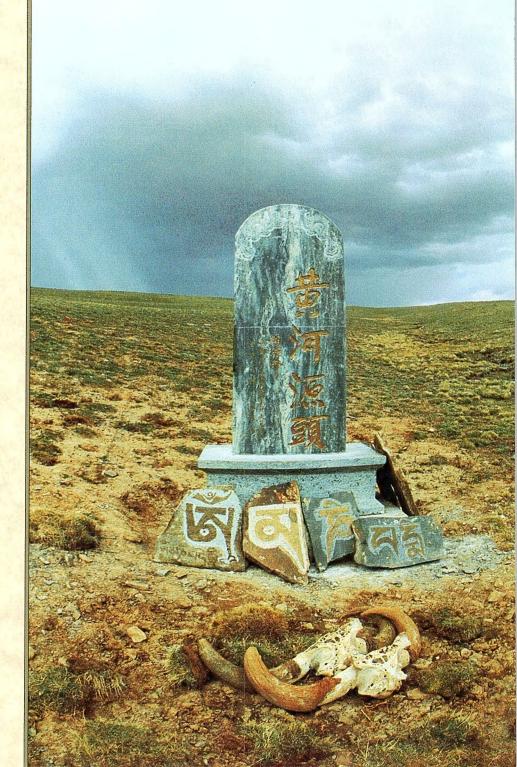


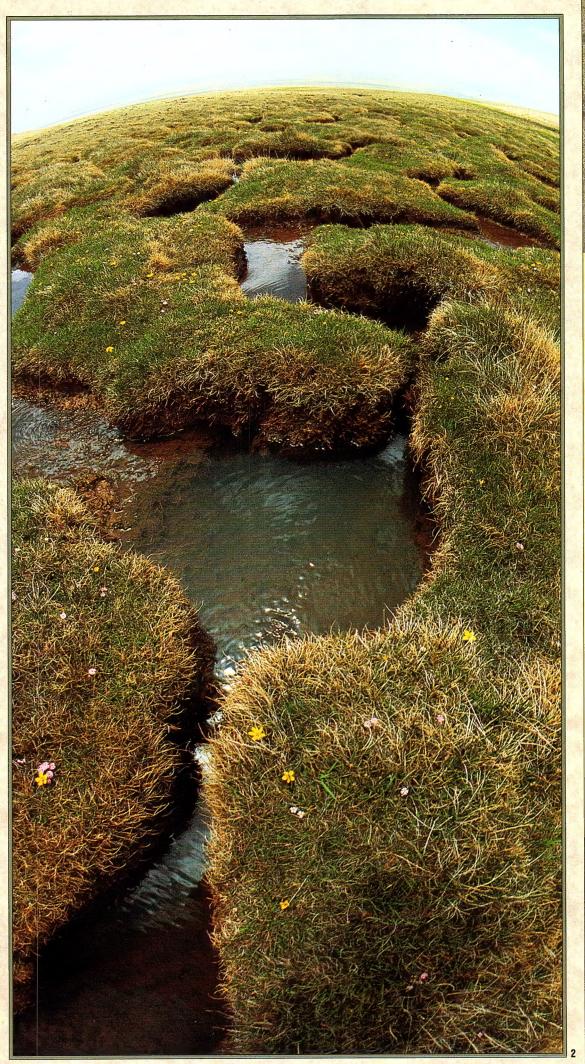
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QINGHAI SPECIAL

n Search of the Huanghe's Source

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY ZHENG YUNFENG







The stone tablet proclaims 'Source of the Huanghe' (1), but where exactly (2)?







hina's second largest river, the Huanghe (Yellow River), is said to rise on the north slopes of the Bayanhar Mountains which stretch for hundreds of kilometres across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the highest plateau in the world. Recent surveys have shown that Mount Gezigeva north of the Bayanhar may be the place. Nevertheless, the general belief is that the river originates in the Yoigilanglêb Basin, from where it runs east through Sichuan, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan and Shandong — traversing nine provinces and autonomous regions all told — before emptying itself into the Bohai Sea. Its total length is some 5.460 kilometres.

Since the area around the source of the Huanghe is remote in the extreme, a place of rounded mountains and great grasslands and swamps, it is obviously quite an undertaking to visit it. And of course there is always the possibility that one will be unable to find anything anyway. Nevertheless, out of curiosity, in the true spirit of adventure, we set out last June with the intention of exploring the headwaters of the Huanghe.

Clear Water Near the Source

From Xining, capital of Qinghai Province, we left by car for Madoi County, the first through which the river passes on its way downstream. Though it was summer time, it was not at all hot inside the car, in fact it was fresh and a little chilly. We were travelling on a plateau at over 4,000 metres above sea-level.

The symptoms of altitude sickness started to appear; we all slowed down, in talking, eating and in our general reflexes. As I was walking around taking photos, I found myself gasping like mad and had to stop and compose myself for several minutes each time before I could press the shutter. I was worried and wondered whether I would be able to complete the trip. My companion reassured me: 'This is quite normal for someone from the outside world. You'll get used to the altitude in a couple of days.'

Once in Madoi County, we were to start our exploration from Lake Ngoring, sixty kilometres west of the town of Madoi. This lake covers an area of around 608 square kilometres. The Huanghe, which is so turbulent in its middle and lower reaches and has overflowed its banks so often over the centuries with such destructive force, runs slowly and placidly into the lake. At this early stage, the river has not yet acquired the yellowish tinge which gives it its name. As we looked at the lake from a distance, we could see limpid waters in many shades of blue, reflecting the sky and the drifting clouds.

Dried Fish as Fuel

Walking by the lakeside, before long I reached a fish drying ground. A large tract of the rocky shore was littered with fish; more could be seen hanging in a nearby fish factory.

The absence of vegetation for



several scores of kilometres around means that people are forced to use dried yak dung as fuel. Even fish taken from the lake serve as fuel for the fire after they have been dried in the open air. To a southerner such as myself this seems a dreadful waste of good fish, but the local Tibetans do not traditionally eat fish.

This is probably the reason for the influx of outsiders from places such as Sichuan and Gansu. There were many of them fishing here. I found it difficult to distinguish them from the local people, in any case, since their skin becomes just as swarthy due to exposure to the excessively strong ultra-violet rays on the plateau.

All these lakes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau are full of fish. All the fishermen need do is cast a dragnet in the lake at night and haul it in the following morning — a bumper catch is more or less guaranteed. I watched some of them pulling in a net. Most of their catch consisted of striped carp, more commonly called huso sturgeon. There were also Yellow River carp, scaleless carp, and many other species which I could not identify.

Storm on Lake Gyaring

About ten kilometres west of Lake Ngoring across a stone-strewn plain is Lake Gyaring. Being so close, they are often referred to as 'sister lakes'.

When we came to Lake Gyaring, which has an area of 542 square kilometres, it presented a view quite different from that of its sister lake. This is a comparatively shallow lake, with an average depth of 8.9 metres. The Huanghe, flowing into it from the southwest, brings silt with it which never has the chance to settle properly because of the constant strong winds. Thus the southern part of the lake is a greyish-white colour.

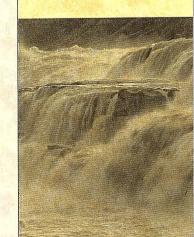
Flocks of migratory birds returning from the south flew overhead from time to time. As I turned back to look over the vast expanse of sands and grasslands, where not a soul was to be seen, I found this place barren and forbidding.

We hired a small boat from the Lake Ngoring Hydrological Station, which is confusingly situated at the edge of Lake Gyaring*, and headed for the so-called Bird Island in the lake. About 7,500 square metres in area, the island — a jumble of rocks and crags in grotesque shapes — is the habitat of many bird species. However, to get there proved no child's play.

We set out in the boat at noon. The weather was fine, the sky cloudless. But then, mid-way, we were surprised by wind and rain. Our little boat was tossed around on the crest of the waves so that we



Drying the catch beside Lake Ngoring (1, and 2, by Sui Xusheng). The carp here are a scaleless species (3).



^{*}Lake Ngoring and Lake Gyaring are located in the western part of Madoi County, Ngoring to the east, Gyaring to the west. In the past, the names were reversed by mistake, leading to the confusion with the name of the hydrological station. The lake names have now been corrected, but the hydrological station has remained unchanged.



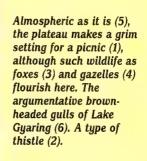








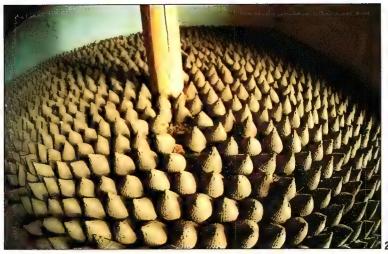














thought we would capsize at any moment. The spray poured in over the bows and we had to bale out without let-up. It was then that we realized just how cold the lake water was, only around 2 or 3°C. If we fell in, we would undoubtedly be frozen to the marrow before any help could arrive. With the weather situation deteriorating rapidly, we were forced to turn back for the time being.

Kingdom of Birds

The following day we made ready before dawn in a renewed attempt to gain the island. At first light, we glided off across the lake. The silvery-grey sky soon turned crimson and, by the time we reached our goal, it was blue and dotted with white tufts of cloud.

Our landing put the whole island into a tizzy. Countless thousands of birds, startled by our arrival, flew up screeching and complaining; they covered the sky, now wheeling high, now swooping low. We dodged as they flew past to left and right. But there was no way of dodging the shower of excrement which forced us to cover our heads with both hands and beat a strategic retreat to the other side of the island. Gradually the commotion subsided.

The major colonies there are of brown-headed gulls, bar-headed geese and cormorants. One young cormorant, catching sight of us, opened its huge beak and squawked as if we were its deadly foe (which of course we might have been!)

In this kingdom of birds the law of the jungle applies. Two gulls were scrambling for a fish out over the lake; neither being prepared to give way, they circled and squabbled noisily. The most beautiful of the birds there, in my opinion, were the black-necked cranes. Their shape is so elegant and their flight most graceful.

The Swamps of Xingxiu

From Lake Gyaring we headed for a village, also called Madoi, the closest to the source of the Huanghe. We travelled along a narrow and heavily potholed sandy track. The car bumped mightily, giving us all a good shaking.

On the way we traversed a vast

stretch of moors and swampland, the so-called Lake Xingxiu. It contains myriads of tiny ponds of different shapes which glisten in the sunlight like stars in the night sky. As it flows through, the Huanghe links up all these separate bodies of water and incorporates them, so that it is impossible to tell which is the actual course of the river.

The area was a maze of different kinds of sedges and grasses. The stones and rocks in the swamps or by the side of streams were covered with dark-green moss; dotted in between were tiny flowers, brilliant dabs of colour. There was a thistle with yellow flowers and pale yellow pistils. Another plant had green leaves similar to those of a narcissus. It sprouted clusters of purple flowers emitting a sweet scent.



I also noticed red and white morning star lilies (*Lilium concolor*) and a species of rose.

Where Wildlife Abounds

This is truly a paradise for wildlife. Here we often saw a solitary fox running across a hillside in the distance. Occasionally one would stop dead and glare at us.

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is also the home of numerous marmots, mountain rodents with a gentle and inquisitive nature. We had the good fortune to spot a pair of them. The size of a cat, they had yellowish-brown fur and looked rather cuddly, cumbersome creatures. Still, they were agile enough; at the unaccustomed sight of humans, they dashed back into their burrow in a jiffy.

As our car advanced slowly, we often caught sight of gazelles and hares streaking across in front of us. Other denizens of the region include wild asses, argali (wild sheep), wild yaks, even wolves, snow leopards and brown bears, although we did not encounter any. Not a single house was to be seen, just the occasional isolated tent standing on a slope, its nearest neighbour many kilometres away. There was still a long way to go to the village and we were hungry, so we opened some cans for lunch.

The First Lamasery

After driving for about an hour, we arrived at Yuanshui Monastery which belongs to the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the first monastery we saw near the source of the Huanghe.

This is a small place with a single hall, by the side of which there were a few cairns, each piled around a pole. Each pole had ropes radiating from its top to the ground and from them fluttered many prayer-flags donated by passing Tibetans.

Entering the hall, we saw five lamas — the sole residents — chanting sutras. The hall contained bronze and clay images of Buddha and other deities and there were frescoes on all four walls, creating a strong religious atmosphere. The hall also contained holy scripts in Sanskrit as well as thangkas*, sacrificial utensils and ritual implements.

In one corner lay a pile of zaza. One of the lamas explained that they stamp these small votive images out of clay with a mould. They are sold for a pittance to worshippers who may take them home or make offerings of them to a shrine.

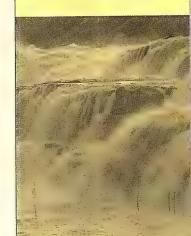
Saying goodbye to the lamas, we continued our journey westward. As we gradually drew closer to the village of Madoi, we met increasing numbers of Tibetans.

Tibetan Dress

All these Tibetans shouted out and beamed at us by way of greeting and were obviously un-

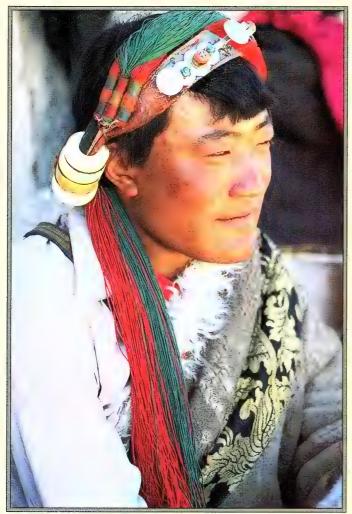


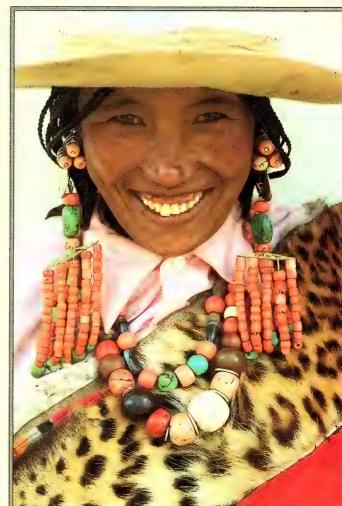
The lamas of Yuanshui Monastery (1) make zaza (2) from moulds. Worshippers have erected a maze of prayer-flags (3) near the hall, which contains precious bronzes of deities (4).



^{*}A thangka is a religious painting in Tibetan Buddhism, usually executed on a scroll of cotton or linen. It has a border of red or yellow silk, and blue silk or Chinese brocade serves as a mount.

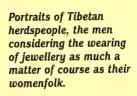




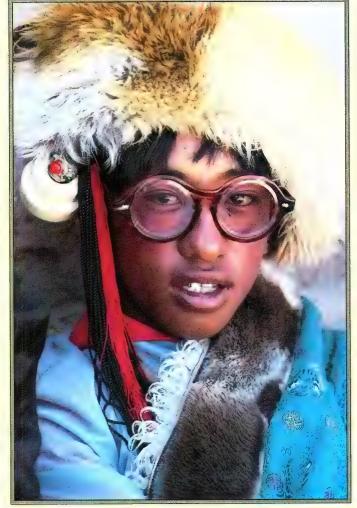


















polished, but carefree and friendly people. One of them, a young man wearing spectacles, knew the area like the back of his hand. He talked and talked, telling us all kinds of stories with great pride and enthusiasm.

I was surprised to find such a young person suffering from severe shortsightedness. Otherwise, he looked the typical Tibetan: lambskin hat and a sheepskin robe — the *chuba* — with an upturned collar. My impression of the way the people dress here can be summed up in two words: bold and dashing! The men not only wear ornaments and jewellery just like the women, their head-dress is unique. Their hair is bound with a bunch of red threads which falls down to the chest and is decorated with agates,

engine was the only noise we could hear and it made us feel drowsy. After we had surmounted a few hills, we realized that the road ahead was smooth and even. Suddenly, herdsmen driving yaks came in the opposite direction and waved to us. With so many people in sight all at once, I told myself, we must be very close to Madoi. And, as I looked to the west, I caught sight of a sea of white tents and a row of red houses.

Our car drew up outside a guesthouse where we heard a loudspeaker bellowing out music and cheering. The sounds were actually coming from some way out on the grassland and we could also faintly hear the clatter of horses' hooves. We ran out there and, as we came near, saw riders spurring and

frigerator. There were plenty of large dogs around, presumably to drive off birds and beasts of prey. For herdsmen on the grasslands, their fierce dogs are an absolute necessity.

Cold Night in a Tent

Dusk was setting in; the dying sun inflamed the sky. Here and there people were driving their yak herds home. Smoke from cooking fires was rising everywhere.

We stayed the night in a tent tucked away in a ravine. Though it was a cold night, it was warm in the tent since it was enclosed by a wall of clay to keep out drafts. The fire was fed with yak dung. The herdspeople offered us cups of hot buttered tea. They also advised us to apply yak butter to our faces to pro-



Yak herders (3) tend to their animals at dusk (1). Exuberant dances mark grassland gatherings (2).

turquoise, coral, amber and ivory or horn.

It goes without saying that the women pay even more attention to their clothing. They wear gems galore — although their value is difficult to assess. In the past, Tibetan women carried their wealth on their backs. Some of them were wearing tigerskins from northeastern China draped over their shoulders and decorative bands encrusted with semi-precious stones (again, mainly coral, amber and turquoise) which hung right down to their ankles.

Horse-Racing on the Grassland

Our car was now moving through mountains betraying no trace of human settlement. The monotonous drone of the car whipping on their horses to thunderous applause mixed with shouts as they made the final dash.

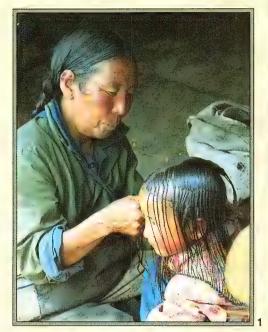
We had arrived for the end of the race which takes place once a year. Dancing and singing followed, the dance steps bold and the melodies simple, animating the otherwise empty landscape.

Back in the village, we had time to observe the life of the herdsmen, which to me seemed very exotic. Tibetans live here in a compact community. In Tibetan, *madoi* actually means 'upper reach of the Huanghe'. Several decades ago, this was open grassland inhabited only by animals.

Chunks of meat — yak or mutton — hung under the eaves. Keeping food outdoors in this climate is as good as keeping it in a retect them from the strong ultraviolet rays.

Wandering around in the village, we were surprised to see masked men coming towards us. The masks were deliberately exaggerated, but highly impressive. They were based on the brave warriors who served under King Gesar of the Kingdom of Linggar of eastern Tibet (in the area which is now Qinghai). The feats of this popular hero — it is unclear whether he was a historical personage - are told in countless songs and stories. Some episodes are thought to date back to the old Bon faith. However, as Buddhism spread, Gesar became the incarnation of a Bodhisattva sent to earth to fight the demons which beset mankind. King Gesar led his troops in fighting from north

















Masks of warriors with a grotesque effect (2, 3). Life in Madoi (1, 5) and panning for gold (4).







to south, defeating demons, giants and evil kings, overpowering the strong and helping the weak. The stories are spiced with drama and romance. Apparently, many Tibetans still believe that he will come again one day, like some Messiah, to take vengeance on their enemies and usher in a new era of peace and justice.

So Tibetans make such masks to earn extra money. Alternate layers of cloth and plaster are applied to a mould. After it has dried, the mask is removed and painted.

The Gold Rush

In recent years, tens of thousands of people have flocked here from Gansu, Ningxia, Shanxi and other provinces to pan for gold. This area is rich in alluvial gold. There is an old saying: 'Where there is a river, there is gold.' Under the influence of the elements, goldbearing rocks are eroded or; disintegrate, and water concentrates the gold in valleys or river bottoms, where it becomes mixed up with sand and gravel. The local method of panning is the traditional one, concentrating on both old and existing river beds. The gold found here is mainly in thin

The gold-panning area, known locally as 'Gold City', is located at the foot of snow-capped mountains, an area of white tents and sand dumps. People come and go there continually. They wash innumerable loads of river sand in water carried to the spot on shoulder poles, shaking the sand in a basket until, after much strenuous work, a few flakes of gold may perhaps be sifted out. Still, anyone who is physically strong and has good luck, could make a fortune. According to the inhabitants of 'Gold City', after three to five months' work they can make several thousand yuan, even ten thousand or more.

Altitude-Sick Car!

We stayed another night in Madoi after our visit to the gold diggings. It was difficult to sleep. Breathing was hard, and we found we had to lie on the right side to relieve the constriction on our chests around the heart.

The following day saw us back on our way to explore the source of the Huanghe. Our car bumped over one rise after another before it entered flat, marshy grasslands which stretched as far as the eye could see. The expanse of green was dotted with tiny flowers in red, white, yellow and blue. I was told that the life of a plant is extremely short in this climatic zone. It must go through the entire process of germination, sprouting, flowering and producing seeds in just two months while the days are warm.

There was no trail as such and our car hobbled across the moors like an old man limping. Sometimes it stopped altogether, chugging as though it were gasping for breath. It was about forty percent less powerful than it should have



been even at maximum acceleration. At other times, its wheels would sink deep into the mud, and we had to get out and fill the holes with stones to give sufficient friction. Tired and panting hard as we pushed it, we all started to feel rather ill. The blood vessels at our temples were swollen, we seemed not to be able to draw enough breath in this thin air, and our hearts were pounding. But, thanks to our joint efforts, we did manage to keep the car moving, however haltingly.

Hide and Seek at the Source

It is only thirty kilometres from the village of Madoi to the Yoigilanglêb Basin but we had to get out and push the car so often that it took us a good half a day to reach. This basin, 4,470 metres above sea-level, was once the site of a vast lake. Its waters gradually dried up as a result of movements of the earth's surface and climatic changes. Local herdsmen say the shape of the basin is like their cauldrons for frying *qingke* (barley).

As we drew ever closer to the head of the Huanghe, we found water trickling from numerous springs to form rivulets. But which of them would lead us to the source we sought?

We followed one rivulet after another upstream, making many false turns and becoming exhausted in the process. All the rivulets seemed to disappear in the swamps or peter out among the grass roots. Once, after strenuous effort, we seemed to be getting somewhere at last but, as if to make fun of us, that stream too lost itself in another valley. The desolate setting in which we found ourselves started to prey on our spirits and we grew increasingly despondent at our failure.

The sun hid itself behind dark clouds and it started to rain. In this region, the seasons do not come in a regular sequence; in fact, all four seasons may be experienced within a single day. The Tibetans say that the weather here is like a baby's face, smiling one minute, howling the next. Weather changes are particularly frequent around noon. Dark clouds may appear in a clear sky, followed by a downpour, a snowfall, even a hailstorm. We were fortunate because the sun came out again after a short period of drizzle.

Still pushing the car, after herculean efforts we finally came upon the source of the Huanghe beyond the further edge of the Yoigilanglêb Basin on the northern slope of Mount Karizhaqiong, Here, a spring is augmented by numerous minor trickles of water seeping from the earth's surface to become a stream about ten metres wide. Who would have expected this to be the head of the mighty Huanghe? Not far away a stone tablet has been erected in a conspicuous position. It is inscribed with four characters Huang He Yuan Tou (Source of the Huanghe) - as though to confirm the matter!

Translated by Ren Jiazhen



The river swings in wide meanders across the plateau (1), but breaks into a confusion of tiny rivulets as it approaches its source (3). Buttercups in profusion (2).



The Mani Wall: Epitome of Tibetan

e were on our way south from Maqên in the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in southeastern Qinghai. After about five hours' driving we passed through the village of Ganglong in Gadê County near the banks of the Huanghe (Yellow River). And there we spied a most unusual sort of wall built beside the river. We stopped immediately to examine it.

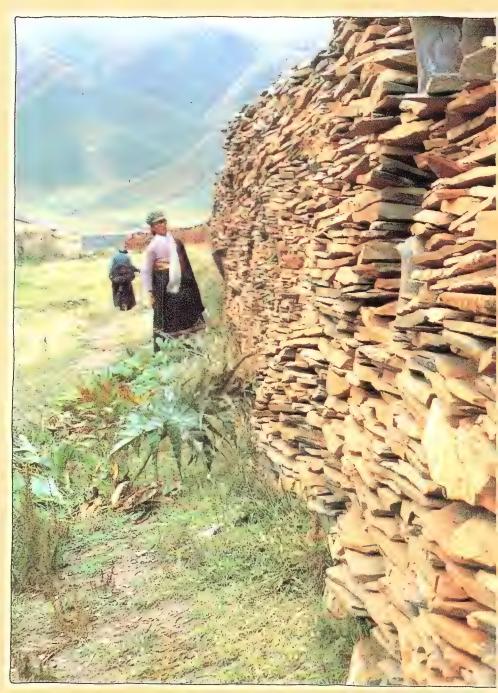
It was a very large mani wall, five hundred metres long and three metres high, made up of tens of thousands of stacked slates, boulders and smooth stone tablets, some of which were carved with religious inscriptions or images of deities, some painted.

The word *mani* comes from the universal mantra of Tibetan Buddhism *Om Mani Padme Hum*, an invocation usually addressed to Buddha or his Tibetan manifestation, Chenrezi (the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara). It is often translated as 'Hail to the jewel in the lotus'. Many of the stones in the wall were inscribed with this mantra. A mani wall is considered holy, and we could see pilgrims and devout passers-by performing prostrations and circumambulating the vast structure in the prescribed clockwise direction.

It is rare to see a mani wall of this size in Qinghai, although in some countries which profess Tibetan Buddhism (Nepal, for instance) they can reach a length of several kilometres. This particular wall at Ganglong has a history of over two hundred years. It was originally built near a lamasery which is now in ruins. Worshippers coming on pilgrimage to the lamasery over the years donated an inscribed tablet or added a stone to the pile which thus grew as a tangible testimony to their faith.

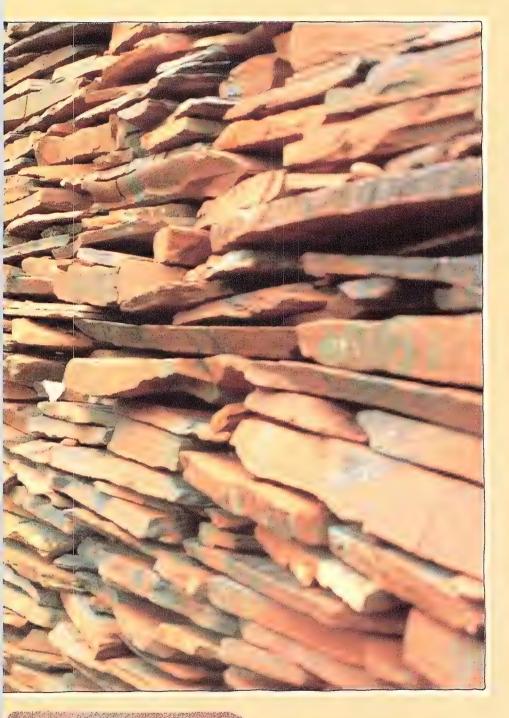
Treasure House of Carvings

The stone slabs are generally around three to five centimetres thick and irregular



Buddhism

PHOTOS BY ZHENG YUNFENG TEXT BY ZHENG QIUHUI



in shape. The inscriptions or engravings on them are carefully executed and follow the natural shape of the stone with some ingenuity. The themes are varied: I saw Bodhisattvas, chortens or stupas, geometric designs — mandalas or aids to meditation, sutras written in Tibetan....

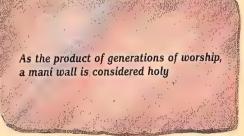
The images are generally well-drawn. One Buddha sits in solemn contemplation in the lotus position on an open lotus flower. Others again are seated, surrounded by a halo, their faces plump, with ears drooping almost to their shoulders. Their features are regular, their pose serene.

Most striking are the monsters. These have a muscular human physique but the head of a ferocious beast. Baring their teeth, they inspire fear and are dharmapalas, protectors of the faith. Among them is Yamantaka the Terrible, scourge of demons and evil spirits.

This treasury of carvings also contains examples of figures dancing, an integral part of many Tibetan Buddhist religious festivals and rituals, when people dance to appease the demons and to please the gods. Since most religious dance is performed by monks and lamas, however, the female figures with draperies floating gracefully around them are most probably dakinis. These are demi-goddesses who are popularly thought to be able to fly; the Tibetan word for a dakini — khadoma — means 'sky-walking woman'. Embodying wisdom, they play an important role as spiritual quides.

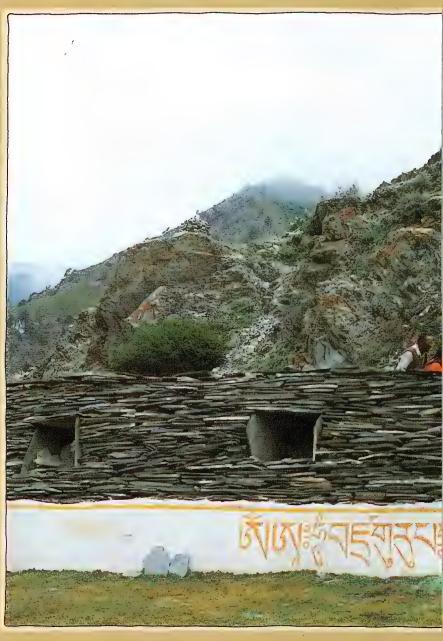
As to the techniques used for carving, the geometric designs are mainly basreliefs. For the images of deities, relief carving is combined with carving in the round for a more dynamic effect. It is truly astonishing how much detail the craftsmen managed to get into each of these relatively small stone tablets.

Translated by Yu Zai Xin

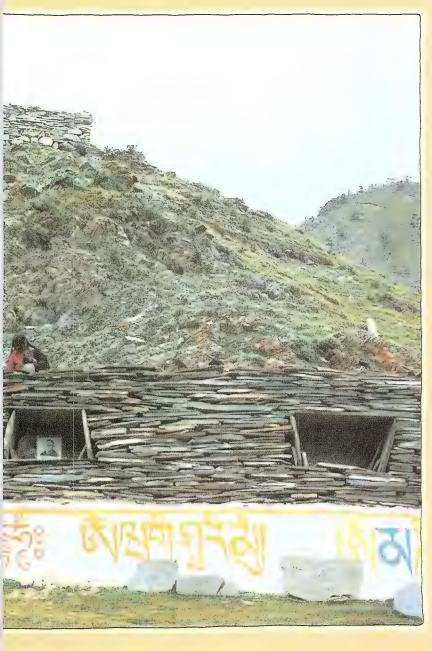






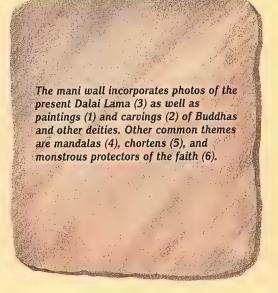












QINGHAI SPECIAL l hree Festivals of Qinghai

PHOTOS BY YUN FENG ARTICLE BY YUN FENG & ZUO YI

inghai is inhabited by many peoples such as the Hui, Tu, Salar, Kazak, Tibetans, Mongolians and Han Chinese. Each lives according to its own traditional ways, either scattered out on the grasslands or in compact communities.

During the course of several trips to Qinghai, we had the chance to attend many local celebrations. The following are just three of the festivals of eastern Qinghai.

June Festival of the Tibetans

In June, the banks of Lake Qinghai are blanketed with tender grass like felt, interspersed with nameless small flowers. Nevertheless, for the Tibetans who live in the vicinity of the lake, this grass is not enough for their herds. This is the time when they must gather up their possessions and take to a nomadic way of life again for a while. They know that they may have to go a long way to find adequate pasturage and may not return until the ice thaws the following spring. So, before they disperse, they first join with friends and neighbours to bid farewell.

This is the reason behind the so-called June Festival. On our way from Xining to Lake Qinghai, we passed crowds of Tibetans making their way to the lakeside on horses or camels or by cart. With an effort, we pushed our

way through the throng.

Our attention was first caught by some Tibetan girls wearing cream felt hats with a wide brim and silver ear-rings. The backs of their floor-length robes were ornamented with round silver plaques, some as large as a pot lid, others more the size of a small rice bowl, and engraved with intricate designs often incorporating coral. Coral beads also figured prominently — together with turquoise — in decorative bands. Part of the attraction of coral for the Tibetans is that it comes from far-off oceans which few of them have seen.

Further on there were girls dressed in a rather different style. Their felt hats were green. Each girl had scores of braids looped together with an intricate arrangement of jewelled bands and threads to keep them from flying around too wildly in the breeze. The traditional number of braids is 108, the same as the number of holy

sutras.



The festival began with a sacrificial ceremony to honour the gods. People tossed *qingke* (highland barley) into the air and, as it fell on the altar, rushed forward to prostrate themselves and present *hata* (silk scarves used as ceremonial gifts of greeting) in a variety of colours. In this way, I was told, they were praying for a happy and prosperous life.

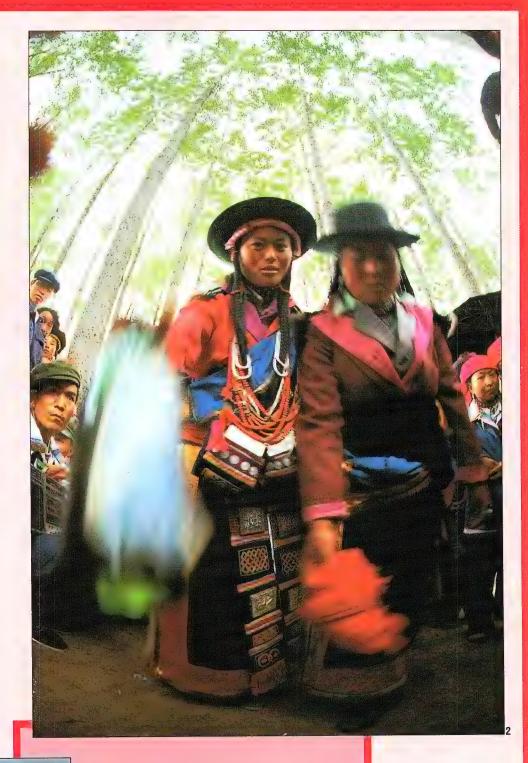
Silk Scarves for the Champion

The solemn ritual over, it was time for the fun to begin! A man surged out of the crowd ringing a brass bell for all he was worth. Girls were not far behind. They embarked on traditional Tibetan dances. As they moved, their skirts swayed harmoniously in time with their light steps and graceful movements.

The most exciting part of the festival was the horse-racing. There were long-distance races to test stamina, short races to test speed, and so on. To young Tibetans, who are practically raised on horseback, this is something they love and at which they truly excel.

Seated on the grass, we watched with great interest. At the crack of the starter's pistol, the riders brandished their whips and urged on their horses, which galloped off wildly, kicking up clouds of dust. As they thundered past the finishing line, the name of the winner was announced at once. The champion was honoured with lengths of yellow and red silk draped over its mane and neck. After winning the race, it was now practically worth its weight in gold.

On our way home, we saw several Tibetan girls standing on a slope looking out over the boundless grasslands with evident nostalgia. They would be leaving the next day. Who knows whether they would ever see this lovely place again?





Before bidding farewell to the grasslands around Lake Qinghai (1), Tibetans join their friends in a dance (2).





The costume details of Tibetan herdswomen from different localities (1, 5) are a delight to the eye. Expert horsemen (2), Tibetans cover a winner with honours (3). Flowers adorn a young mother (4).







The Corban Festival

One fine day in late July we left Xining and travelled southeast along the Ping'an-Linxia road to Jishi, a small town in the Xunhua Salar Autonomous County. We had expected to suffer from the heat but the air was agreeably crisp. The scent of fruit hung in the air.

The Salar, who number about 70,000 in all and speak a Turkic language, are said to have come from Samarkand in the fourteenth century. They are followers of Islam. In the streets, men wearing white caps and kowtowing in the direction of Mecca are a common sight. Moslems must pray like this five times a day. The Salar use the Islamic calendar, which is lunar but different from the Han calendar, and celebrate all the Moslem festivals.

It so happened that the second day after our arrival was the Corban Festival, one of the three major festivals of Islam, which falls on the tenth day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. First thing in the morning the men must undergo ritual purification (wudu), dress themselves in the approved manner and go to the mosque for public prayer (salat). The women have to pray or recite the Koran — the holy book of Islam — at home.

Early that morning, we were woken by the voice of the muezzin calling the people to prayer. The atmosphere in the small town was strongly religious. Having bathed ourselves and put on fresh clothes out of deference to local custom, we drove to the mosque, the largest and oldest of the Salar people. A Koran kept in this mosque is said to have been brought here by the Salar when they fled some kind of disaster in olden times. This is also said to be one of the three oldest copies of the Koran in existence in the world today.

The mosque is magnificent, its architecture awe-inspiring. A horizontal plaque with an inscription in gold hangs on the lintel to the prayer hall. Strangely, there was not another soul in the mosque, either inside or out. The guide told us that the people had all gone into the hills, so we hurriedly drove off, not wanting to miss anything.

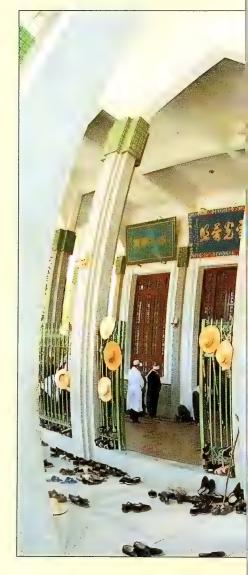
Festival of Sacrifice

The next part of the ceremony was held at the foot of a hill. The sky was blue, the sun beat down onto the dazzling white caps all the men wore. People sat, legs crossed, on the small rugs they had brought with them, arranged in a neat square formation. The elderly sat in front, the others behind them according to age. Boys gathered around to watch. In their midst I spotted a few small girls.

On one side stood a dais decorated with multicoloured banners. Everything looked most solemn and dignified. Using a microphone, an imam addressed the gathering, reminding them of the origins of the Corban Festival in both the Salar language and Mandarin.

The name of this festival in Arabic, he told them, is *Id al-Kurban*, which means 'animal sacrifice'. Legend has it that, to test the faith of Ibrahim, God ordered him in a dream to

sacrifice his first-born. But then, as Ibrahim was on the point of offering up his son, an angel came and ordered him to kill a lamb instead. Delighted, Ibrahim slaughtered the lamb as an offering. With the establishment of Islam, this simple animal sacrifice developed gradually into the present three-day festival. He reminded them that, on the first day, the Salar gather for morning prayer. Afterwards they divide themselves up into groups of seven and each group, led by an imam, slaughters an ox or sheep. Part of the carcass is sent to the mos-



que, the rest distributed among relatives and friends or used to entertain guests. The meat may not be sold.

After the imam's discourse, prayers were recited for about an hour. When the session came to an end, the crowd dispersed, mostly on foot but some on donkeys or horses. Some took a car or rode a motorcycle.

The Grand Banquet

We followed them back to town. People began sharpening their knives in preparation; oxen and sheep or lambs were selected and killed. In the afternoon, visits were made and friends and relatives sat down together to eat.

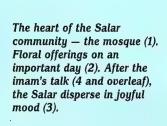
When we called on a household near the Camel Fountain that afternoon, we were warmly received.

Ushering us in, our host invited us to sit at a table in the courtyard. It turned out that he was throwing a sumptuous banquet. There were already seventy or eighty people seated around tables. All kinds of foods were brought to us. As I chewed a sausage made of mutton, lamb's heart and liver, I looked around and realized that all the guests present were men. Our host explained that men and women eat separately

on these occasions. Smiling, he pointed to another part of the courtyard and I saw that many women wearing gauze headsquares were enjoying the feast in a room behind several Chinese prickly ash trees.

As we were talking and laughing, young girls brought another round of food: fried pancakes, dumplings with a mutton filling, triangular buns stuffed with sugar, barbecued mutton to be eaten with the fingers, wheat porridge and a host of other good things. The table fairly groaned under its load!

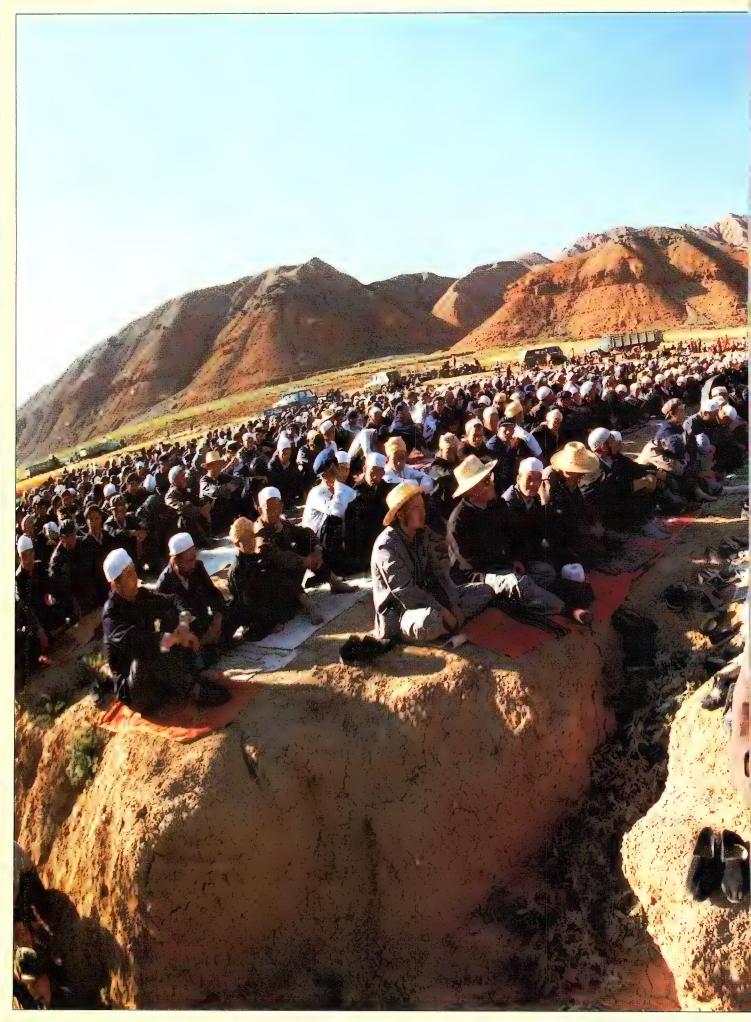


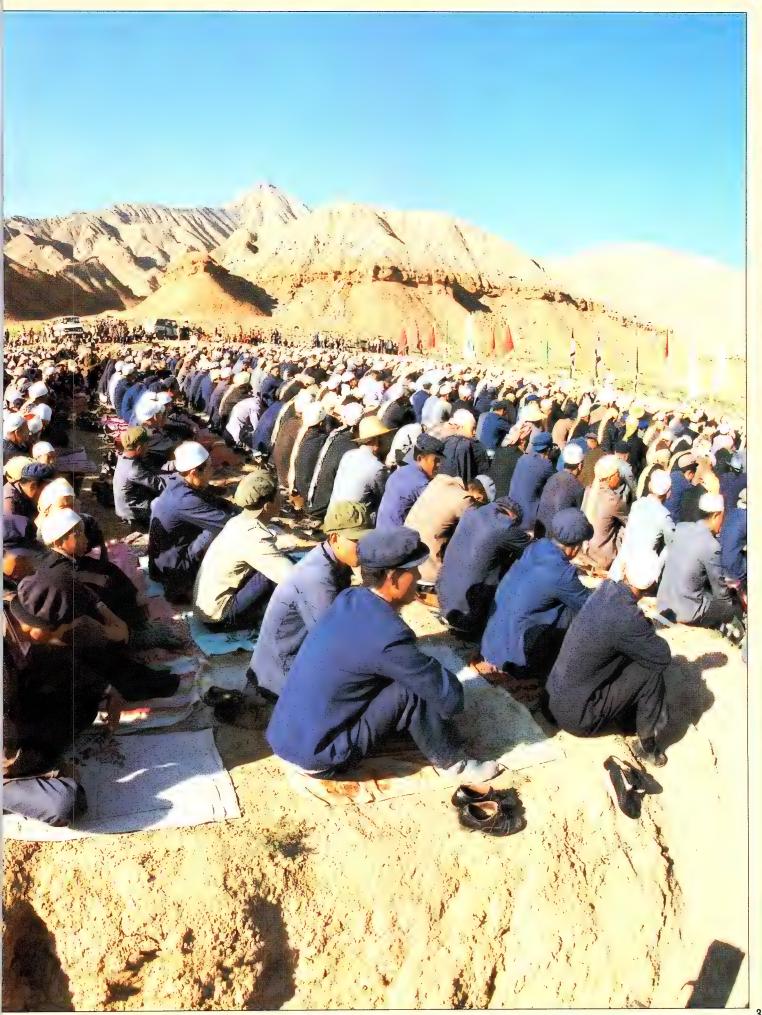












The Hua'er or Flower Festival

On the sixteenth day of the sixth month of the lunar calendar (which may fall in July or August), young people from all over the region gather at Danma in the Huzhu Tu Autonomous County to celebrate the Hua'er Festival (hua'er in the Tu language actually means 'song'). Since this is an important chance for them to choose their spouse by way of antiphonal singing, it is also known as the Lovers Festival.

The story connected with this event explains how it gets its other name of Flower Festival. Long, long ago — we are told — Danma was a place of trees and flowers. One day a young shepherd noticed a strange light shining out across the grasslands which he knew so well. Going to investigate, he discovered a flower such as he had never seen before. When he looked at it again, the flower metamorphosed into a beautiful girl. They fell in love and became betrothed. But the local headman, a lecherous fellow, determining to have this beauty for himself, went with his henchmen to take the girl away by force. The young shepherd put up a stubborn fight but was overwhelmed and beaten to death. At that crucial moment, the Danma villagers arrived on the scene and killed the bully. Eventually remembering the girl who was the cause of all this excitement, they searched for her everywhere, but could not find her. All they could see were the tiny flowers which had blossomed all over the grassland. It is said that these had sprung up from the tears of the beautiful girl, who was thenceforth considered a Flower Fairy.

Ever since, young Tu men and women have remembered this tragic love story on its anniversary. They sing in praise of the Flower Fairy and her love, the young shepherd, while looking for a sweetheart of their own.

Tu Girls in Rainbow Colours

To attend the Hua'er Festival, we took a longdistance bus from Xining, capital of Qinghai Province, northeast to Weiyuan in the Huzhu Tu Autonomous County. There we changed to a bus which took us to the village of Wushi, from where we walked the final distance to Danma. The fields were crisscrossed with small paths along which came a constant flow of young Tu people on their way to the festival.

At Danma, a stage had been set up. Row upon row of spectators were packed in front of it. Further away, a loudspeaker amplified the shouts of acrobats as they performed. Stalls had sprouted all over the place, selling snacks of countless types. The air was full of enticing smells.

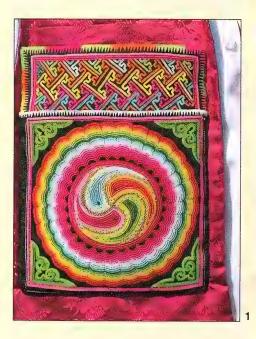
Girls were wandering about in twos and threes, each holding a blue umbrella. Seen from some distance away, they looked like clusters of blue flowers coming together, then dispersing. Out of curiosity, we followed one group of girls to a quieter spot and watched as they tied red thread around their braids as a sign that they were single but of an age to marry. Others were carefully decorating their felt hats with flowers.

The costume of these Tu girls is really

something special. Their garments are colourfully embroidered. Even the broad sash they wear around the waist is embroidered with flowers, birds, butterflies, bees and so on. Some of them add an extra touch by hanging four or five meticulously embroidered xiangnang — a kind of cloth purse stuffed with fragrant materials — from their sash. But most eyecatching of all are their sleeves with multicoloured wide silk stripes. When a girl waves her arms, one thinks of rainbows arching across the sky.

Sweet Love Songs

The young people gradually gathered down by the riverside under the trees. Holding up their blue umbrellas, they began to sing. Their voices and the sound of the *suona*



(horn) echoed through the mountains and across the fields.

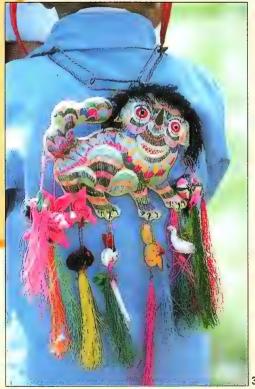
As we were listening, our attention was distracted by a sweet and melodious song coming from another group of young men and women. We joined them and discovered that they were singing in antiphonal style, that is, consecutively, in a sort of question and answer fashion. Though we were unable to understand the words (the Tu speak their own language, which is very similar to Mongolian), judging by the glances they were exchanging we were convinced that these were love songs.

A middle-aged Tu onlooker, seeing that we were strangers, kindly invited us to share his rug and offered us some wine, saying each of us must drink three cups. The man told us that the songs were indeed full of tenderness and emotion. The spectators listened attentively, sometimes giving a knowing smile. The young ones in the crowd were keen to participate. As soon as one singer stopped, another would chime in immediately. So everyone at the Hua'er Festival was both singer and spectator.

Translated by Wang Mingjie



Gathering to sing (2), the Tu show off their gala best with intricate embroidery (1) and examples of playful xiangnang (3, 4).









Tu women enjoy dressing up for the festival (1), and both young and old welcome this opportunity to meet and make friends (2, 3).



QINGHAI SPECIAL Utan Monastery — A Jewel Unknown PHOTOS BY LI DONGRI & HUANG YAN

Buddhist monastery six hundred years old but in a surprisingly good state of preservation lies tucked into a mountain village twenty-one kilometres south of Ledu, itself sixty-three kilometres east of Xining, capital of Qinghai Province. Its name is Qutan, a transcription of Gautama, the family name of the historical Buddha. Though this monastery is historically important, few people know of its existence, let alone of its many artworks.

In Qinghai, where most monasteries adhere to Tibetan Buddhism, it is rare to find a religious complex displaying the Han Chinese architectural style. Qutan Monastery is highly unusual in this respect. To understand how this came to be, we need to examine the monastery's history.

Dating from the Early Ming

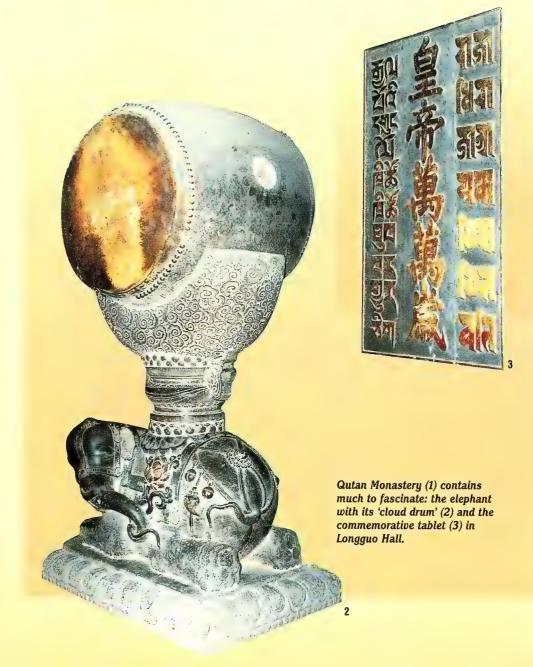
Most of eastern Qinghai Province came under Chinese influence during the early Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). Tea was traded here for horses during the Tang dynasty (618-907), such activities forging links between the nomadic peoples of the region and the Han Chinese of the Central Plains.

At this same time, from the seventh to the ninth centuries, Tibet (known as Tubo to the Chinese) reached the apogee of its military and political might, as well as its greatest territorial expansion. Thus the armies of the powerful Songtsan Gambo (608-650), who ascended the throne of Tubo in 634, started to exert pressure on China's western borders. To avoid confrontation, the Tang court pursued the policy of marriage between the ruling families, two Tang princesses in succession being married off to Tibetan rulers, most famous of course being the marriage between Songtsan Gambo himself and the Princess Wencheng in 641. During the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) too, major efforts were made to rally the support of Tibetans by appointing their religious leaders to positions of political power.

Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), continued this conciliatory policy. He was generous in bestowing titles on the high dignitaries of Tibetan Buddhism which they were permitted to pass on to their successors. The purpose of all this was to win over the hearts of the Tibetan people and consolidate the border.

According to records preserved in Qutan Monastery, although a Buddhist temple existed here even earlier, the monastery in its present form dates from the early Ming dynasty. Its foundation was due to a holy figure known as Lama San Luo. Born in southern Tibet in the late Yuan dynasty, San Luo was a contemporary of Tsong Khapa (1355-1417), the founder of the Gelugpa or Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, who was himself born not far west of Qutan Monastery in a place which is now the site of Ta'er Lamasery.

San Luo left his home when he was young and lived for many years as a hermit on Mount



Haixin on an island in Lake Qinghai. People began to call him the 'Hai Lama'. When the Ming court extended its control into the area of present-day Xinjiang, it considered the contributions made by San Luo and his prestige among the local people and decided to establish a monastery in his honour. The lama was asked to choose a location and, impressed by the favourable geomantic conditions here, had this monastery erected. At the invitation of Lama San Luo in 1393, the Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang named the monastery Qutan, writing this in his own hand. The wooden board with the emperor's calligraphy still hangs in the main hall of the complex.

San Luo died on April 12 1414. His body was preserved in the monastery and placed in a shrine in the centre of Longguo Hall so that worshippers could pay homage. Now encased in glass, it is still an object of veneration after more than five hundred years.

The monastery enjoyed more than two

centuries of fame and prosperity but then, under the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), it began to decline. The Manchu court shifted its favour to newer monasteries, such as the Ta'er Lamasery. In view of the ever-growing popularity of the Yellow Sect, Qutan Monastery also switched to this branch of Tibetan Buddhism, but even this was not enough. It gradually fell into oblivion.

Murals in Chinese Style

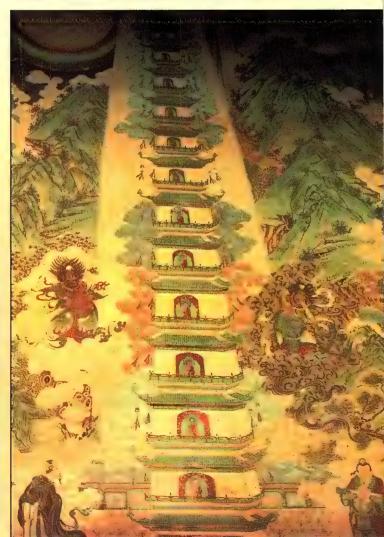
The monastery stands surrounded by fields of buckwheat. In the summer, the breeze sweeping across the crops also carries with it the clear tinkle of the aeolian bells which hang from the eaves of the monastery, underlining the timeless charm of this ancient place.

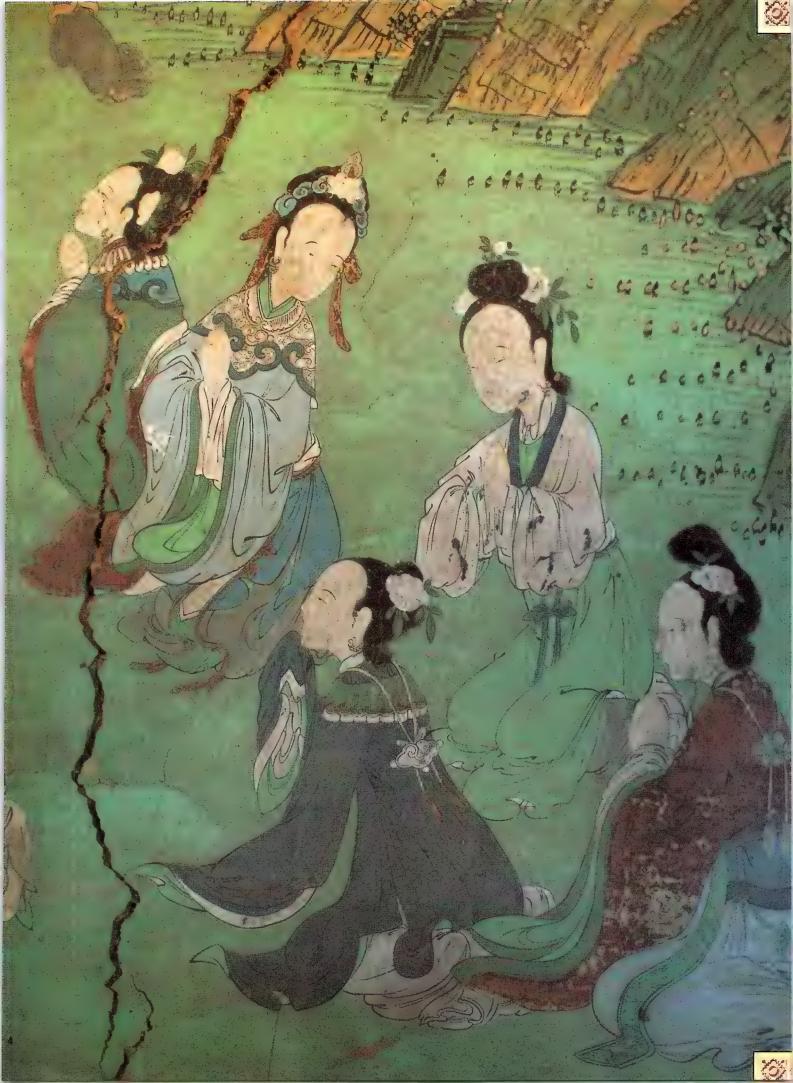
The main gate is distinguished by a large area covered with tiles engraved with square chain patterns, each with a carved flower. Beyond the entrance stand two pavilions built in the early fifteenth century, each sheltering



Wall-paintings on the life of Buddha reflect elements of the Han Chinese lifestyle in a multiplicity of details (2, 3 and 4 by Zheng Yunfeng).







a stone tablet. They resemble the pavilions at the Ming Tombs just outside Beijing.

The remaining major buildings — the Hall of Arhats, Qutan Hall, Baoguang Hall and Longguo Hall — are erected on successively rising terraces set in perfect symmetry in a rectangular layout on a central east-west axis. A typically Chinese arrangement.

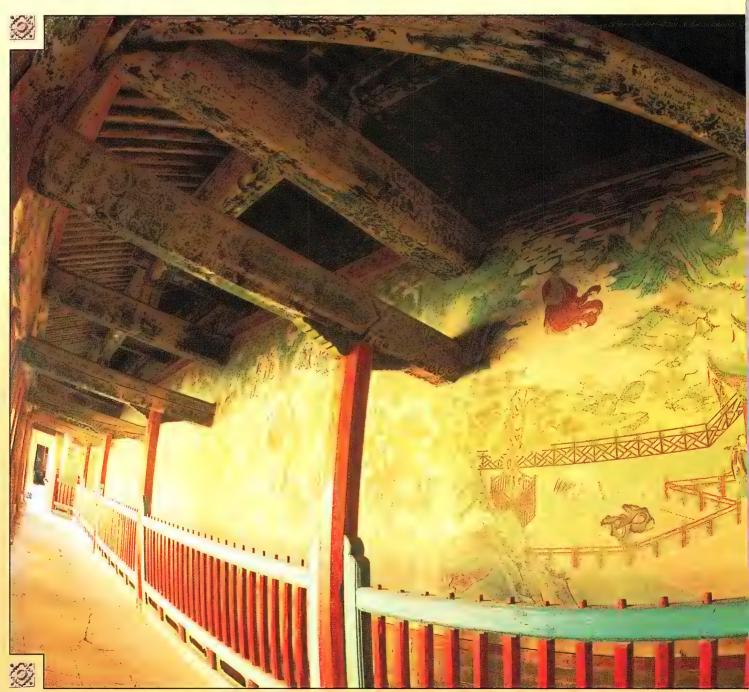
The tallest and largest building in the complex is Longguo Hall. In Tibetan its name is *Duojieqiang* meaning 'Grand Vajradhara Hall' (Vajradhara is the supreme Buddhahood of the Yellow Sect). This majestic hall was completed in 1427 on the orders of the Ming emperor Xuanzong, a particularly strong supporter of Buddhism. Apart from the mummy of San Luo, the hall contains many treasures. A lotus-shaped stand, once the base of a colossal Buddha, in the middle of the hall bears a tablet

inscribed 'May the emperor live for thousands of years' in both Chinese and Tibetan. There is also an elephant carved from reddish-coloured stone. One metre tall, the kneeling elephant carries clouds carved from wood which in their turn support a drum, the 'cloud drum', a symbol for thunder. The elephant holds a flower with the tip of its trunk in a most elegant pose, tribute to the skill of the sculptor.

But the most stupendous artworks are found on either side of Longguo Hall in galleries covering about four hundred square metres. Their walls are ablaze with huge murals. Some depict the daily life of the people and mundane concerns, while others form a sequence of episodes from the life of Gautama Buddha. Such wall-paintings would have been used for religious instruction and can be interpreted at many different levels.

The paintings were executed in natural mineral pigments. From the techniques employed and the style of the paintings, it is fairly easy to conclude that they date from two different periods. The earlier works show firm but elegant lines and a harmonious, rather restrained use of colour. Poems with seven Chinese characters to a line complete each sequence of murals, explaining its theme. The later paintings, on the other hand, are painted in brilliant colours and reveal a much more complicated design. However, the contrast of colours is too harsh, and the overall effect is confused and overly 'busy' and therefore not as pleasing as the earlier murals.

These wall-paintings were rendered with the scattered perspective typical of traditional Chinese landscape painting, and the ink-dotting technique common in Han Chinese painting



was used for hills, rocks and trees. The smooth style and vivid execution of these wall-paintings reflect the artists' experience and skill, the colour scheme being overall fairly subtle by comparison with murals in a purely Tibetan tradition. In addition, many of the objects portrayed in the murals were commonly used by Han Chinese in the past. The inscriptions on the screens on either side of the hall lead us to conclude that some at least of the artists must have been Han Chinese.

Esoteric Elements

In the bell tower beside Longquo Hall hangs a giant bronze bell dating from 1427. It stands 1.8 metres high and has a diameter of 1.5 metres at its mouth. It is inscribed in Chinese and Tibetan; 'Cast in the Xuande reign of the Ming dynasty'. This bell was famous for its rich

and carrying tone, 'The ring of the bell in Jiaota can frighten the horses in Bayan' is a popular saying among the Tibetans of the area. Jiaota is the Tibetan name for the area around Nanshan in Ledu County where the monastery owned land; Bayan was a pasturage in Hualong County fifteen kilometres from the monastery.

Following the mural gallery to the west, one comes eventually to Hufa Hall. Though smaller than the other structures, it is no less significant. It contains statues and murals with a strongly esoteric flavour, revealing overtones of Tantric and indeed occult practices.

Particularly striking are the paintings on the lintel as you enter the hall. One represents human and animal skins slung over ropes as though still drying. The spine-tingling impression is that the hides only very recently parted company with their late owners.









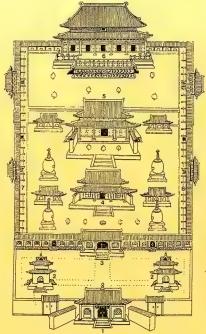
The glowing murals in the galleries outside (1, by Zheng Yunfeng) contrast with foreboding images of human skins (2) and skulls (3) from Hufa Hall.

Skulls of human beings and animals have ritual symbolic significance, but do not represent bad luck for Tibetans (as they would for Han Chinese). Such symbols often appear in Tibetan Buddhist art. The skulls painted on a block of wood in this hall are a good example. To produce an even greater effect, the craftsman hollowed out the block at the skulls' eve sockets, creating a third dimension. The skulls bare their teeth in what looks like a grin. Their intention was to inspire terror, but in demons and evil spirits rather than in the human beholder.

Such apparently repellent objects were often used as aids to meditation, especially in connection with certain Tantric rites. They were intended to help the monk visualize the illusory nature of this world and assist him in renouncing worldly things. One example is the Tibetan damaru, a drum made of two skulls fitted with human skin, which underlined the transitoriness of human existence. Each of these objects corresponded to a different stage of spiritual development.

Translated by Ursula Yeung

Plan of Outan Monastery



Go For Action GO FOR "DRAGON-FLY" **BADMINTON SHOES** 蜻蜓牌球鞋蜚聲海外

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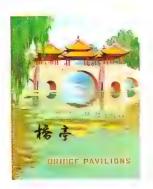
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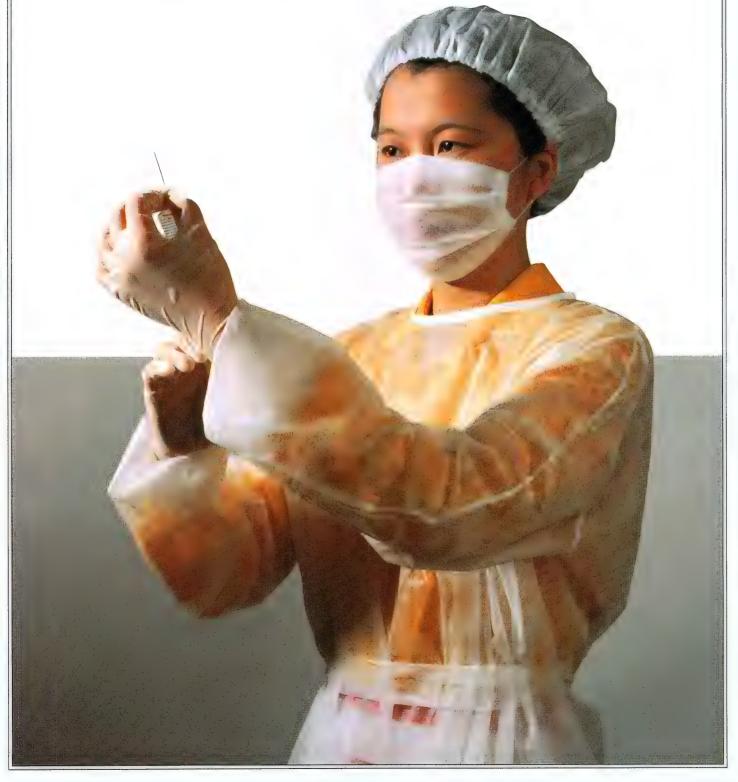
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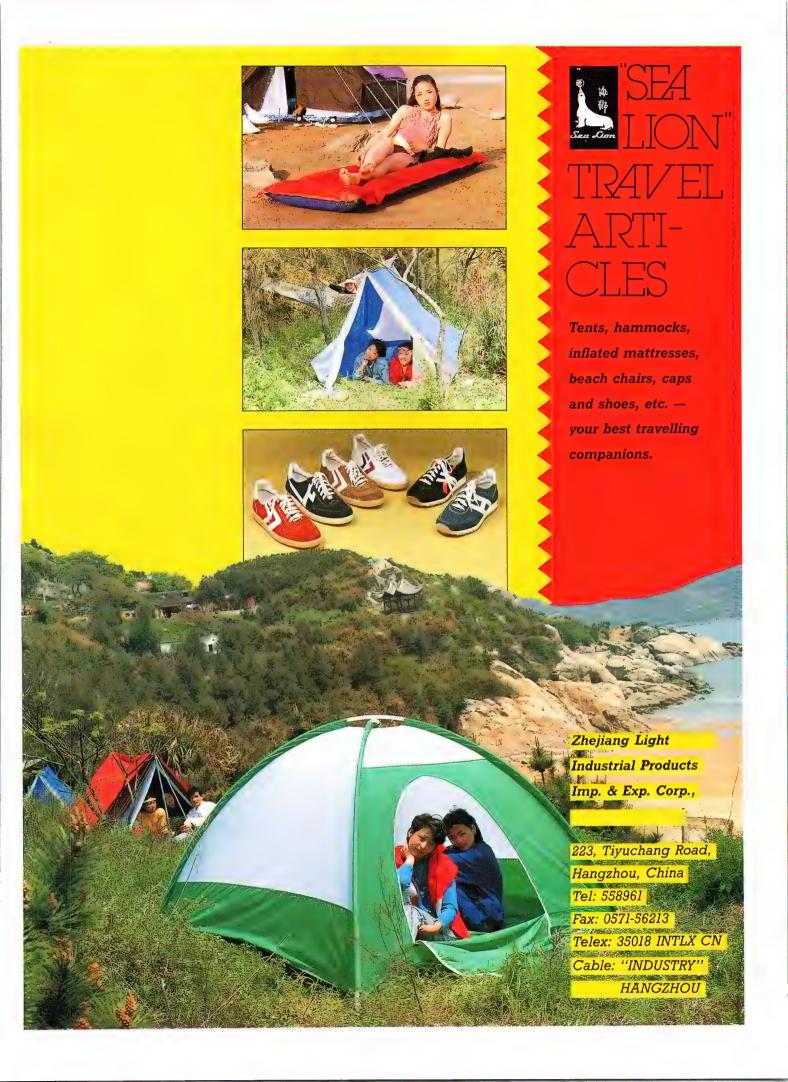
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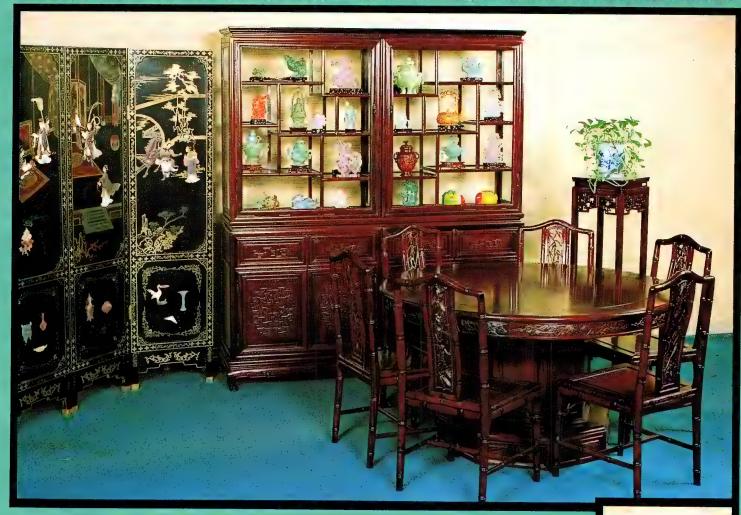


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Return to the Hakka Heartland

PHOTO BY CHAN YAT NIN ARTICLE BY YING YANG



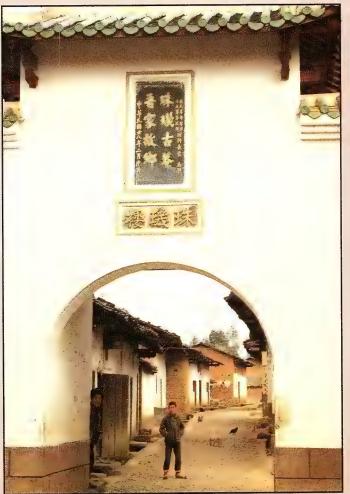


am a Hakka. When my grandfather was alive, he often used to tell me: 'Our ancestors all came from Zhujixiang in Nanxiong County.' He would point out the split in his little toe nail and continue: 'Look! This is the scar, passed on through the generations, that our ancestors acquired during the course of their migration to the Zhujiang (Pearl River) Delta.' This of course is a legend believed only by the older generation nowadays, but it is a fact that the Hakka people originated much further to the north.

Towards the end of the Western Jin dynasty (265-316), some Han Chinese living in the valley of the Huanghe (Yellow River) crossed to the south bank and moved away, driven by wars in the region. Then, in the late Tang (618-907) and late Southern Song (1127-1279), further waves of Han Chinese migrants made their way south into Jiangxi, Fujian and the northeastern parts of Guangdong. The people already settled in these areas called the newcomers hakka — the word in Mandarin is kejia (guest family) — to differentiate them. As time went by, they themselves accepted and adopted this name, their feeling of a separate identity being bolstered by their distinctive dialect, which experts have related to tenth-century speech.

The Hakka people are now mostly concentrated in Guangdong, but others live in Fujian, Guangxi, Sichuan and Hunan, as well as Taiwan and sundry countries of Southeast Asia. There are about four million Hakkas on the Chinese mainland.

Even after my grandfather passed away, I still heard a lot of older people saying that Zhujixiang was their ancestors' home, so one vacation I decided to go and see for myself this quasi-mythical place in Nanxiong in northern Guangdong.







Zhujixiang Revealed

Nanxiong County is situated on the upper course of the River Zhenshui and is separated from Jiangxi Province by the Meiling Range. A long-distance bus from Shaoguan, which followed the banks of the Zhenshui, got me to Nanxiong in three hours. The remaining ten kilometres to Zhujixiang took me along the Guangdong-Jiangxi Highway.

To my surprise, Zhujixiang is just a small village by the side of the main road. You enter the village through an arched gateway. I wandered along the ancient cobbled lane through the village, which was the scene of a battle between the Taiping Army and Qing troops in the midnineteenth century. The houses on either side looked very dilapidated; some of them were in ruins. The whitewash on those walls still standing had flaked off, exposing the underlying brick. Zhujixiang seemed particularly desolate since there were few people around.

The village contains a solid stone pagoda from the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the only dateable Yuan relic in Guangdong Province. It was built in 1350. The seven-storeyed pagoda stands 3.5 metres high and covers a well where a princess is said to have committed suicide.

At the northern edge of the village rises Zhuji Tower, the foundations of which are of red stone, its walls fresh with whitewash. After reading the stone inscription, I realized that the tower is only sixty years old. It contains a statue of a god-like figure in ornate robes said to have been a prince of unknown name and history.

According to the residents, the village was once called Jingzongxiang. During the reign of Emperor Jingzong of the Tang dynasty (reign dates 825-827), the head of one of the village households called Zhang Chang was granted

The old pass marks the border between Guangdong and Jiangxi (1). Zhuji Tower inside (2) and out (3). Traditional Hakka cooking makes use of salted pressed duck (4) and stuffed chillis and beancurd (5).

a large quantity of pearls and gems by the imperial court in recognition of the fact that seven generations lived in harmony under his roof. As the name of the village happened to be the same as the reign name — considered taboo — it was changed to Zhujixiang (Lane of Pearls and Gems) at that time.

I was also told that at the end of the Northern Song (960-1127) and beginning of the Southern Song, when the capital Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng in Henan Province) fell into the hands of the Jin, a large number of court officials and commoners followed Emperor Gaozong in his flight. And some of them are said to have climbed over the Meiling Range and settled in Zhujixiang. Descendants of these refugees, belonging to ninety-seven households with thirty-three different surnames, migrated further in groups during the last years of the Song and early part of the Yuan dynasty to the Zhujiang Delta, from where their descendants in turn spread out all over Guangdong Province.

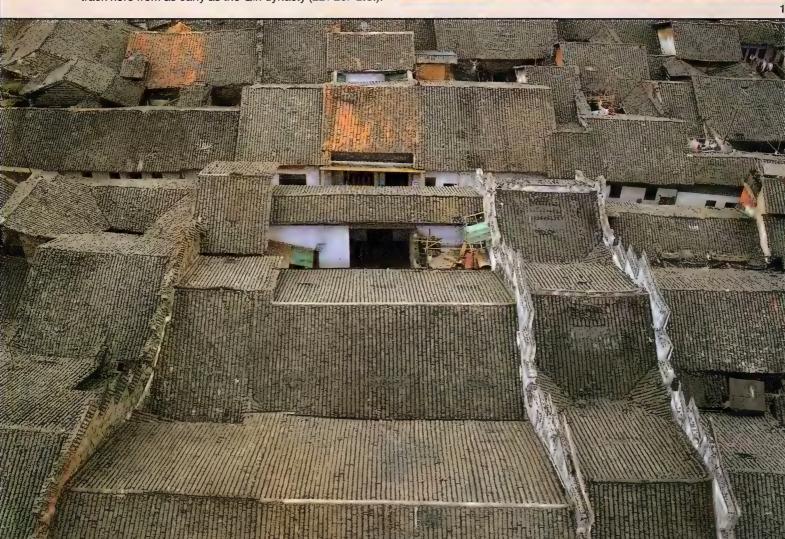
Ancient Hill Track

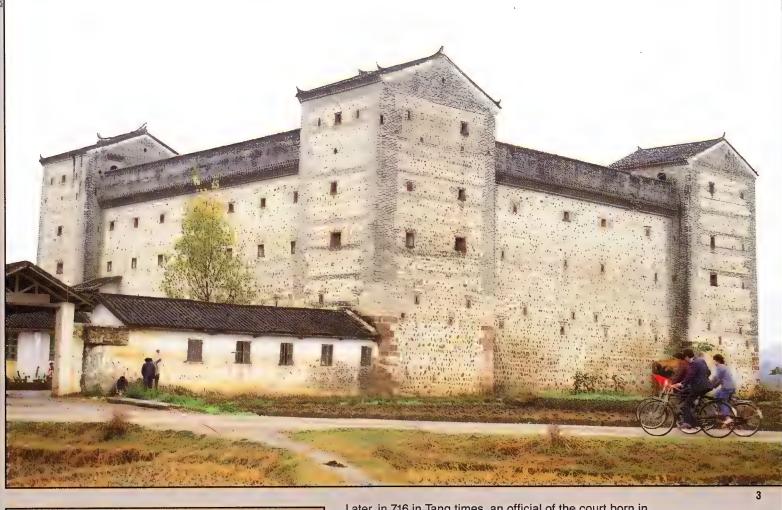
In order to take a look at the route by which the Song court officials and commoners supposedly reached Zhujixiang, I went off to the Meiling Range around twenty kilometres to the north.

These hills, which are also known by the name of Dayuling or the Dayu Range, stretch along the border between Jiangxi and Guangdong and rise to around one thousand metres above sea-level. An old paved path takes visitors to the top of the hill. There was a rough and rugged track here from as early as the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.).

An ancestral hall in Nanxiong County with roof decorations of a type uncommon in Guangdong (1). The architecture of an urban Hakka community (2) contrasts with the massive walled dwellings of rural areas (3). Stones resembling dinosaur eggs (4) and uncured tobacco for sale in Nanxiong (5).











Later, in 716 in Tang times, an official of the court born in Guangdong, one Zhang Jiuling (of whom more below), was ordered to open up a way through these hills for couriers. The path was enlarged to about five metres wide, enough to allow the passage of large chariots. The Meiling Range became an important axis of communications between the Central Plains and Guangdong and a place of some strategic importance.

Strolling along, I was surrounded on either side by luxuriant vegetation, and the flagstones of the path were almost hidden by the growth of moss and wild grasses. Plum trees flourished on the ridge. Though it was not the right time, I could visualize how the hills must look in the spring, covered with white blossom.

At the top of the path stands a fortified gateway marking the boundary between Guangdong and Jiangxi. On the side of the pass (for that is what it was) facing Guangdong there are five characters signifying 'First Pass of Lingnan', while the side facing Jiangxi bears the inscription 'Powerful Pass of Guangdong'. A large stone stele erected by the side of the gate is inscribed in red with characters nearly the height of a man reading 'Mei Ling'.

It was almost dark by the time I returned to Nanxiong and I was starving, so I rushed to find a restaurant. My meal consisted mainly of stuffed dishes such as beancurd stuffed with meat, stuffed chilli and stuffed dried mushrooms — all traditional Hakka food. Of course I did not omit the cured meats, such as salted pressed duck, for which northern Guangdong is noted.

Apart from being a Hakka centre, Nanxiong is also famous as having been the haunt of dinosaurs in prehistoric times. The many fossils unearthed within the county are exhibited in Nanxiong Museum. Most interesting to me personally was an entire dinosaur skeleton, as well as numerous fossils of dinosaur eggs. The museum has been built around a Song-dynasty

pagoda. A ladder leads up to the top, from where one has a fine panorama over the town. The tiled roofs of the singlestorey dwellings arranged in rows look like surging waves, parting at intervals to reveal the well of a courtyard.

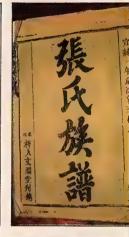
On the pavements in the town hawkers squat, selling heaps of uncured but shredded tobacco. The inhabitants of Nanxiong often buy tobacco in bulk to roll their own cigarettes or make pipe tobacco. Some of them prefer to buy green tobacco leaves to dry themselves.

Zhang Jiuling's Legacy

My next destination was nearby Shixing County, the birthplace of Zhang Jiuling (678-740), the Tang court official I mentioned earlier. He was in fact the first minister to come from Guangdong Province and made important contributions to the success and prosperity of the Tang dynasty.

Passing through the Shixing countryside, I frequently saw imposing structures something like castles or fortresses with seemingly impregnable outer walls of stone and brick. Most of them have a single entrance, and the windows in the lower part of the walls are mere slits, to protect against bandit raids in the past. The rooms all give on to a central courtyard. Different Hakka localities favour different architectural layouts (for example, the walled houses here are square, whereas in western Fujian they are usually round and made of rammed earth), but each of these buildings represents a compact Hakka community. A walled house may be as high as a ten-storeyed building and house an entire village; all the residents are interrelated. I watched Hakka women in the simple traditional







Hakka women (1, 3). Reading the Zhang family's genealogical record (2) is a weighty undertaking (4). Mushrooms and maize dry (6) in a house on the site where a Tang-dynasty ancestor once lived (5) (2, 4 and 5 by Fang Xinrang).





dress working in the fields. Shouldering laden bamboo poles, they walked with a sort of swaying gait to make their burden easier to manage.

Many of the villagers in these parts are said to be descended from Zhang Jiuling. Some villages still keep a few objects allegedly bequeathed by the Tang minister, for example, the tablet used by Zhang when he had an audience with the emperor. The village which keeps this and which is the location of Zhang's ancestral temple is also the proud custodian of the Zhang family's genealogical record.

Such a record is considered the property of the whole village and is usually kept by the village headman, who shows it only reluctantly to outsiders. However, when I explained the purpose of my visit, the headman — after a long moment's thought — agreed to break with custom. The genealogical record consists of five thick volumes bound with thread, each weighing a good ten kilos. Turning the massive pages with some difficulty I perused this village treasure. It records the family tree of Zhang Jiuling, from his earliest ancestors to descendants living at the time of the Republic (1912-1949), as well as the major events which affected the various generations. Its contents are practically a summary of village history. The most touching aspect is that it faithfully describes the family's prosperity and decline.

As I browsed over one particular page, the headman standing beside me pointed out the name Zhang Fakui. This was a famous general during the War of Resistance against the Japanese in the twentieth century. As military governor of Guangdong Province, he was immensely

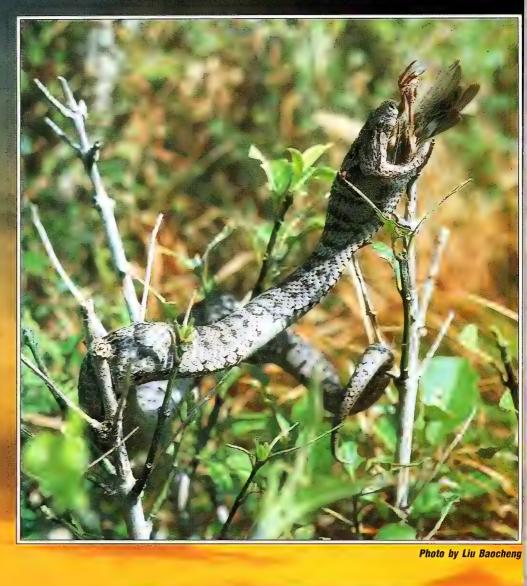


powerful. I was surprised to discover that he was a direct descendant of Zhang Jiuling in the forty-fourth generation!

Escorting me out, the headman indicated a hill nearby and said, 'Zhang Jiuling used to live up there. You can go and look at the site.' I thanked him and headed for the hill. The site is now covered by a small Hakka walled house, much less imposing than those I had seen earlier, the home of several families who cultivate the land jointly, growing vegetables and fruit.

With the householder's consent, I took a look inside a few of the rooms. One of them contained a large bed carved with restrained designs and several cabinets large and small. On the walls hung photos of family members and a calendar — everyday things. The householder showed me some examples of what he said was Zhang Jiuling's calligraphy. Life continues simply here, despite the village's illustrious ancestor.

Translated by W. Lau



KINGDOM OF PIT VIPERS

TEXT BY WANG JIEYU



ith other members of my group, I set out from Lüshun at the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula in Liaoning Province to explore the so-called Snake Island (also known as Little Dragon Island) out in the Bohai Sea. Although the island has an area of less than one square kilometre, it is inhabited by tens of thousands of pit vipers (Agkistrodon halys), a poisonous species of the rattlesnake family with a triangular head and a greyish-brown body which can grow to almost two metres.

Our boat drew alongside the island's quay near a large rock. Fitted out with special overalls and helmets, leather gloves and boots, the better to confront the snakes, we set off bravely.

The shore was littered with rocks of every conceivable size and shape over which hovered seagulls and sundry birds of prey. A tedious climb over wet, slippery rocks brought us to a place half-way up a rocky, weed-covered hill where there was a cottage, the administrative office of the island, although it appeared to be deserted.

Making our way round a patch of grass, we came to a huge rock. Some coiled vipers lay there inert. As their colour was almost a perfect match for their surroundings, at first sight they seemed like mere crevices in the rock's surface. Although pit vipers will not attack unless they are harassed or feel threatened, once they are aroused, they bite ... and their bite is fatal.

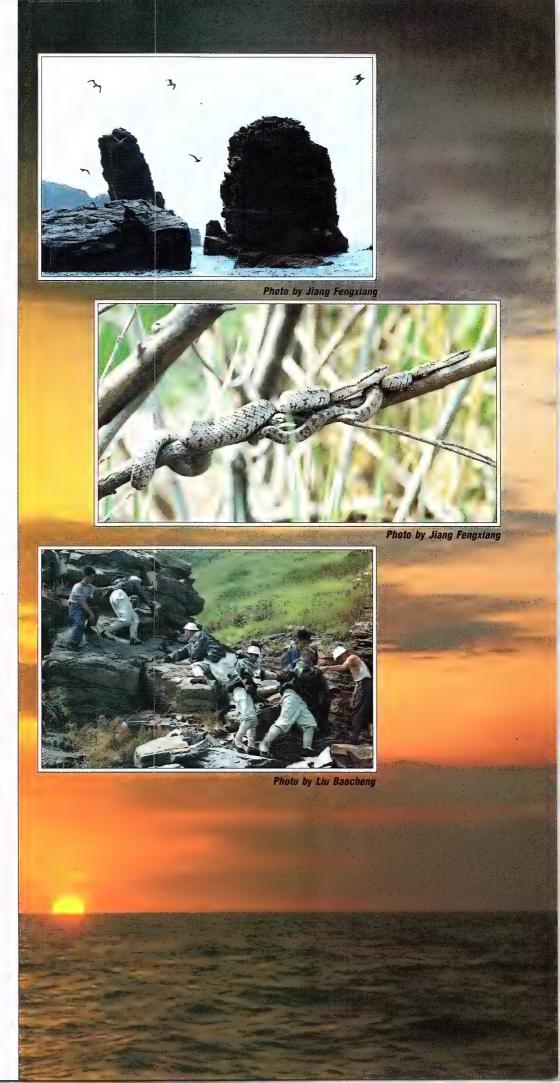
Just a short distance ahead the group leader made a sign to us to halt. A one-metre-long snake was coiled motionless around a tree trunk with its mouth wide open, stretched to ten times its normal size. The researcher who accompanied us told us that they can stay in this same position for days at a time. Just then a small bird flew low and the viper's head shot out. It seized the bird in its jaws and swallowed it immediately, giving it no chance to struggle.

Not only small birds but even birds of prey are their victims, as we witnessed a little later with our own eyes when we watched a fight to the death between a viper and a hawk. The hawk saw the snake on the ground, swooped down and picked it up. But, twisting its body wildly, the snake lunged round and succeeded in injecting its venom into the bird's body. Dazed, the hawk released its intended prey and lost height, alighting on a tree where it sat gasping for breath. In only a matter of minutes, the hawk was seen hanging upside down from the branch. Death had already intervened!

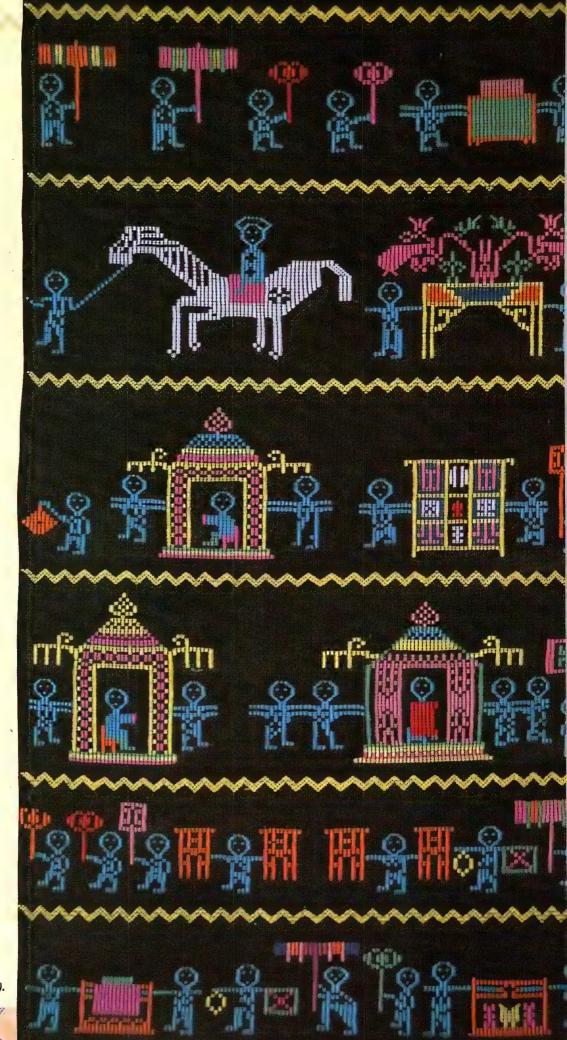
The island's environment is probably responsible for the hunting abilities of its pit vipers. It lacks fresh water, so many species of small animals and reptiles which are the usual prey of snakes cannot live there. In fact, those snake species that eat only mice, rats and amphibians such as frogs and newts have died out. Only snakes such as the pit viper which also eat birds have managed to survive. There are few resident birds, but the island is on the flight path of migratory birds in the spring and autumn so the vipers can gorge themselves for two seasons of the year. During the summer and winter they are passive.

At dusk we left. As our boat pulled away, I looked back one last time at this strange island which, under the mantle of night, gave off an aura of mystery....

Translated by Gu Weizhou







Xilankapu are produced on a wide range of themes, whether abstract geometric motifs, a frieze-like depiction of a wedding procession (1) or an overall animal-based motif — here a goat (2) (both by Chan Yat Nin).



Xilankapu: Weaving with a Background of Centuries

TEXT BY WONG CHUNG FAI

t country fairs in the western parts of Hubei and Hunan, you often see brightly coloured woven textile lengths on sale in small shops and street stalls. These are examples of xilankapu, the traditional brocade of the Tujia people. In the Tuija language, xilan means 'quilt cover', while kapu means 'flower' or

This type of fabric has a history as long as the Tujia nationality itself. Chang Qu, a scholar of the Eastern Jin (317-420), records the following in his History of the Ba and Shu under Annals of the Huayang State: 'Emperor Yu summoned his vassals to a meeting in Kuaiji. All the states offered him jade and brocade, as did the States of Ba and Shu.' From this we know that as early as the times of Yu the Great, founder of the Xia dynasty (21st-16th century B.C.), the Ba the ancestors of the Tujia — were presenting textiles as tribute to the emperor. During the later Qin and Han dynasties (221 B.C. - A.D. 220), xilankapu was known as gongbu (tax or tribute cloth). The remarkable thing is that this style of weaving should have survived right down to the present day, and with such vitality.

The use of colour in xilankapu is linked to the history and traditions of the Ba and thus the Tujia. In ancient times their way of living was simple in the extreme: homes consisted of a single room which served as bedroom and kitchen at once, meaning that everything inside was blackened by smoke from the cooking fire. In order to make up for the general dinginess, xilankapu-weavers used vivid, contrasting colours such as red and green, yellow and purple, orange and blue, against a dark blue or black background. The borders of the xilankapu were generally white or grey in order to tone down the impact of the bright colours and give an overall harmonious effect. Tujia weavers still adhere to this colour scheme today, except that warmer colours such as red and green may now

be used for the background.

At first glance, the xilankapu designs seem to be purely abstract. Only close examination reveals that these are stylized animals, cat's paws, ninepetal plum blossoms, peonies, clouds, even prosaic articles such as chairs and tables. There are in fact more than 120 designs, passed down through the centuries, which are closely connected with the early lifestyle of the Ba. For centuries the Ba tribe lived among mountains and forests in the







The simple backstrap loom of the Tujia weaver (3) produces highly decorative textile lengths (2), including one specially intended as a birthday gift (1) (all by Wong Chung Fai).





upper and middle reaches of the River Yangtse. As hunters by necessity, they were familiar with all the local flora and fauna which they duly incorporated into their weaving.

One common motif is the bull's eye. This refers back to a Tujia legend which relates how, one autumn day, as a herd of bulls were grazing on a mountain slope, they were attacked by a tiger. At first sight of the tiger, the bulls were startled, even frightened, but they soon regained their composure. They stared at the aggressor with furious eyes then charged it, whereupon the tiger turned tail and fled in panic. To this day the Tujia people regard the bull's eye as a symbol of the victory of good over evil and love to use it in their *xilankapu*. Other common motifs include the snake or snakeskin and the white tiger since these were the totems of the Ba tribe.

The ends of the *xilankapu* are mostly arranged strictly symmetrically, giving something of the effect of the crenellations on a wall. This is possibly a reflection of the architecture of ancient China, which emphasized the horizontal plane and a symmetrical layout.

Xilankapu have been hand-woven from cotton and wool by local women since ancient times. In a Tujia village, almost every household owns a wooden loom of a design dating back to the Han dynasty. This is a fairly small loom, quite low and short, with a strap going round the weaver's back to hold the warp threads taut. It produces pieces fifty centimetres wide and up to one metre long. Tujia weavers use the method known as 'continuous warp and broken weft'; in other words, the longitudinal threads — the warp — remain fixed in position throughout, while the cross-threads — the weft — are shuttled backwards and forwards and may be cut off and replaced by different-coloured threads as the pattern (worked out in advance) requires. The woven lengths produced are suitable for use as quilt covers but also as pillow-cases, tablecloths, shoulder bags, cushion covers or door curtains. Sometimes even skirts and dance costumes are fashioned from xilankapu, which not surprisingly is also an indispensable element of the Tujia dowry.



A Country Visit South of the Yangtse

PHOTOS & TEXT BY DONG MINGMIN









ocated in northern Zhejiang Province some thirty-eight kilometres southwest of the provincial capital Hangzhou, Fuyang County offers some of the many picturesque sights along the River Fuchun downstream of Qiandao (Thousand Island) Lake.

Fuyang's Tourism Bureau has recently developed a special tour programme involving a stay with farming families on Xinsha Island in the river two kilometres east of the county town. Situated at the confluence of the Fuchun with the Dayuan Brook, the island is the result of a lengthy build-up of sedimentary deposits. It emerged above the water in 1842 and has been expanding gradually ever since. The island now covers an area of 4.12 square kilometres and supports a population of over nine hundred. Its inhabitants earn their living by growing rice, breeding silkworms, rearing livestock and by sundry crafts such as embroidery and hand-made paper.

This special programme aims to provide foreign tourists with a chance to experience village life as it is even today in this fertile, water-rich area south of the Yangtse. Living in the homes of villagers, visitors enjoy fish and shrimps caught locally and vegetables and other produce grown by their hosts.

Transport is unconventional and fun. To reach the island, a trip on a bamboo raft is involved, and rafts are also used for jaunts along the River Fuchun or around the island. When visiting other families, tourists who do not want to walk can take a ride on an ox-cart (the only form of public transport on the island!).

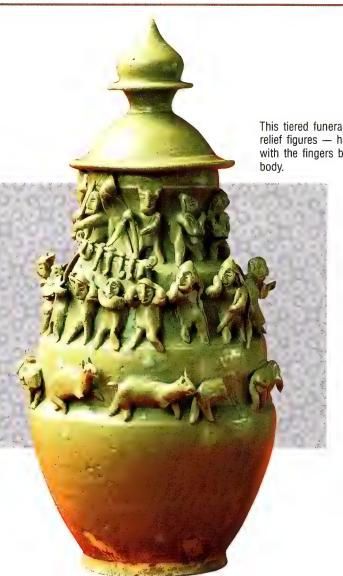
One of the highlights of this tour is the extent to which visitors can make themselves familiar with the local lifestyle and the traditional handicrafts. Fuyang is famous for its paper which is made in the time-honoured way by manual processes from rice straw and young bamboo stems. But tourists also have a chance to work in the paddy fields with ploughs, forks and rakes and operate ingenious waterwheels by hand or foot. They can learn how to separate chaff from grain with wooden rice-hullers and grind wheat, rice and soya beans by means of heavy stone mills.

There are fascinating insights to be gained into the silk trade at grass-roots level, seeing how the villagers breed silkworms. This is seasonal work, so one has to be there at the right time. The process starts soon after the Spring Festival (which usually falls in February). The silkworm moth lays eggs which are incubated and hatch into larvae which stuff themselves with mulberry leaves for four or five weeks before spinning their cocoons. The cocoons are collected, dried and their silk unwound five times a year: spring, summer, autumn, mid-autumn and late autumn. Silk fabric of course always sells well on the international markets. But some silk floss — usually of inferior quality — is kept back especially by the villagers to make soft, warm quilts and silk-padded clothes.

On a completely different level, visitors also have the opportunity to attend an exciting (and bloodless) goat-fight.

Translated by Gu Weizhou

Enjoying a rural interlude by ox-cart (1) and bamboo raft (3). Papermaking (2) and milling (4) the traditional way.



This tiered funerary jar features concentric rings of highrelief figures — human and animal — modelled freely with the fingers before being applied to the preshaped body.

Yue Celadons

PHOTOS BY SHEN QIUSHENG TEXT BY HUA NIAN

Ceramic models of aspects of everyday life, especially those reflecting material wealth — such as a pig in a pig-sty — were commonly made and enclosed in the tomb of the owner on death. Pigs have been domesticated in China since earliest times.





This squat, fat pot needed only the addition of head and feet to become a toad, perfect down to the colour of the glaze. The narrowness of the opening is deliberate to further accentuate the toad's plump shape ... displaying both humour and artistry.

n the town of Yuyao in eastern Zhejiang Province one can see examples of celadon ware dating from the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220). Despite their great antiquity, their glaze is still remarkably smooth and clear.

Celadon is one of China's renowned discoveries in the field of ceramics. Early wares have been found in tombs from as far back as the Warring States Period (475-221.B.C.). The invariably monochrome glazes range from bluish-green (almost turquoise), pale grey, misty green and olive-green to a dark brown.

The cluster of kilns — more than twenty — in the vicinity of present-day Yuyao and neighbouring Shaoxing gradually became known as the 'Yue kilns' from the town's former name — Yuezhou. These kilns came to specialize in the production of green celadon famous for its hard but fine paste and the quality of its glaze. They reached the peak of their reputation much later, during the Tang, Song and Five Dynasties (618-1279), when Yue celadon was a prized tribute to the emperors. The Tang hermit Lu Yu, a tea connoisseur and author of the Canon of Tea, considered that the Yue kilns provided the most perfect teabowls. He described Yue celadon as 'like jade', 'like ice', and 'green like the colour of infused tea'.

Even these very early Yue celadon wares, however, are distinguished by the use of techniques such as moulding, impressing, incising, carving and applied decoration. The refined elegance would come later; there is still a lively, rustic touch about these works.

Translated by Chapman Lee

Possibly for practical use as a ceremonial wine jar, more probably (in view of the damage to the glaze) a funerary item, this tall piece features three-dimensional applied figures of humans, birds and animals. At the bottom we can distinguish a tiger, a snake and a warrior who appears to have the situation under control.



The Clown in Chaozhou Opera

TEXT BY HU LIN

haozhou Opera, one of the many traditional forms of Chinese opera, is found in eastern Guangdong, specifically around Chaozhou and Shantou, as well as in neighbouring southern Fujian. It is also widely popular in those countries of Southeast Asia harbouring sizeable Chinese communities.

It had its origins in nanxi ('southern drama'), which flourished in Jiangsu and Zhejiang during the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). With its rich repertoire, spiced with interesting and entertaining episodes, nanxi spread along the southeastern coast, gaining a following in the Chaozhou area in the early years of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). By the middle of the dynasty it had evolved into a new form — Chaozhou Opera — which also incorporated many elements of classical music handed down from the Song dynasty as well as the rhyme schemes current in Ming times. During its development, Chaozhou Opera also absorbed the local gong and drum music, religious music and folk songs.

Importance

Traditionally, Chaozhou Opera was characterized by its arias sung on a relatively flat level devoid of extremes high or low, unlike the later Beijing Opera (now considered the classical national opera form) which relies on both singing and acting (plus acrobatics in martial scenes).

Chaozhou Opera as it is performed today has another distinctive feature — its many clown roles. Hence the popular saying: 'No Chaozhou Opera without clowns.'

There is a story behind this. Apparently, a few decades ago, Chaozhou Opera used to be performed for several days and nights at a time without stopping. Deep in the night, when the actors and actresses were close to exhaustion and the audience was starting to flag and lose interest, the troupe director would stir up the public by sending a couple of clowns on stage. Enlivening the atmosphere with their humorous patter and outrageous antics, the clowns would at the same time give the other artistes some respite. Such

marathon sessions are now a thing of the past, but clowns have gone from strength to strength.

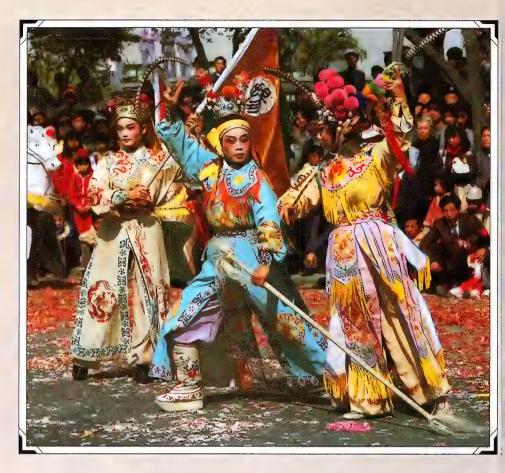
The performers in earlier days were generally children barely ten years old. Often, on reaching puberty, their voices were found to be unsuitable for singing lead roles, so they switched to clown roles, which were less exacting. Gradually, more roles were written for clowns. Nowadays, clowns play the leading roles and usually earn more money than the others, so there is always a lot of competition for these plum positions. One result of this is that the artistic quality has improved alongside the improvement in status, with the consequence that clowns are now indispensable to any performance of Chaozhou Opera.

Comic female roles are usually played by men for greater effect (1). Clowns fill many roles: xiaosheng (2), government official (3), wusheng (4), laosheng (5, by Wong Chung Fai) (1-4 by Ma Ka).









Versatility and Improvization

The fact is that clowns fill a great variety of roles. Depending on costume, social status and the temperament of the figure they portray, clowns may fall into ten categories including *xiaosheng* (young scholars), eunuchs, *laosheng* (older men), *dan* (female roles), *wusheng* (martial roles), representatives of the common people, and historical persons from the Qing dynasty. They play characters ranging from emperors and generals to beggars and loafers. Out of eleven roles in any opera, seven are typically played by clowns.

This is very different from the situation in Beijing Opera, where clowns fulfil a specific comic purpose and are normally limited to secondary roles. The leading roles are invariably serious, heroic figures, often of noble family, and it would be unthinkable for them to be portrayed by clowns. And yet it is said that the emperors Xuanzong and Xianzong of the Tang dynasty (618-907), who sponsored theatrical troupes, used to enjoy playing clown roles themselves.

Clowns in Chaozhou Opera are free to improvize over and above the limits of the libretto and breathe life into the characters they portray by means of exaggerated mimicry. They are helped in this by sophisticated make-up; male clowns are distinguished by the white patch on and around the nose, often in the shape of a butterfly (the size of the patch depends on the degree of funniness of the character). For example, Wan Jiachun in *The Assassination of Liang Ji* has eyebrows positioned not over his eyes in the normal place but at their corners, making the audience feel that the character is all smiles and underlining his optimism and good humour.

In addition, clowns often imitate the actions of animals such as the monkey, rat, frog, dog, lizard and so on, as well as the movements of characters from shadow plays and puppet shows. The overall effect is both vivid and comic. Since Chaozhou Opera can be recited and sung in local dialects, this brings the performers all the closer to their audience.

Translated by Gu Weizhou

The subtle skills of applying make-up (1). Chaozhou Opera takes to the street at festival time (2) (both by Wong Chung Fai).







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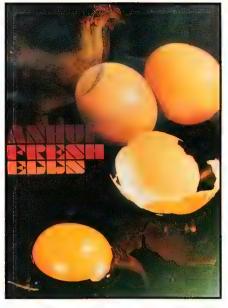
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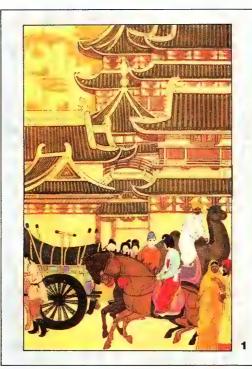


How Jian Zhen Took His Teachings to Japan

DRAWINGS BY WU DI



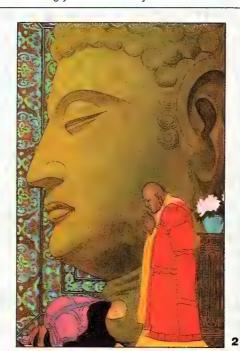
Taken from *Jian Zhen*, published by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House, Shanghai



Yangzhou, an ancient river port on the River Yangtse and a flourishing mercantile centre at the time of the Tang dynasty (618-907), was the birthplace of Jian Zhen, one of China's most famous travelling monks.

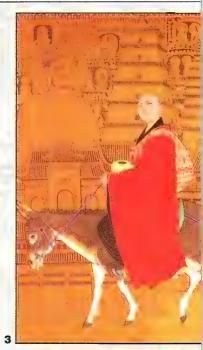
Born in 688, Jian Zhen became a novice when he was fourteen.

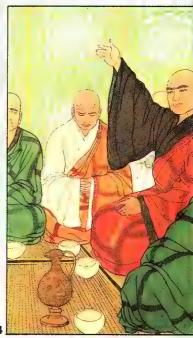
To deepen his knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures, when he was twenty he travelled to religious centres such as Luoyang in Henan and Chang'an (now Xi'an) in Shaanxi. He was made a full monk the following year. After a few years he returned



to Yangzhou where he stayed for over three decades, teaching around 40,00 disciples and building over eight temples.

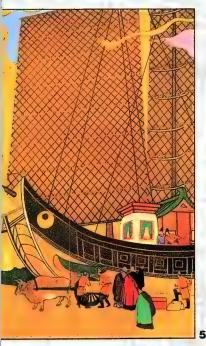
At that time Buddhism in Japan wa suffering from a lack of good teachers in 733 Emperor Shomu sent tw monks to China on a mission to fin and bring back a suitable Buddhis master. On meeting Jian Zhen in Yang

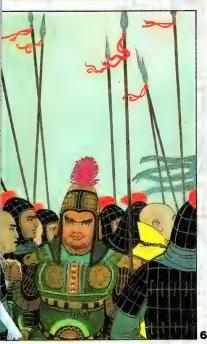




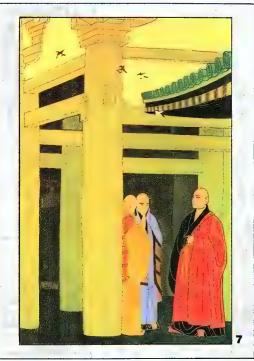
zhou, they told him of their intention but when he asked his followers who would volunteer, none of them felt wor thy of such an honour. In the end Jiar Zhen himself accepted in view of the importance of the task.

He was then fifty-five. Moved by his example, many of his disciples agreed to accompany him. They started to build a ship and lay in supplies. But one disciple, jealous at being left out, went to the local authorities and accused some of the monks of conspiracy.





The officials immediately had the monks arrested, including the two Japanese monks, and confiscated all their property. After a lot of trouble the charges were dropped and the monks were set free, but their ship remained impounded.

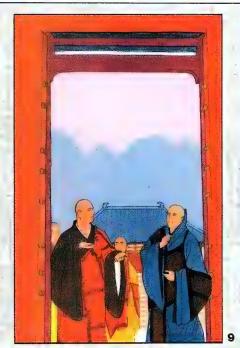


Still, Jian Zhen eventually managed to make a first — unsuccessful — attempt. Nothing daunted, he comforted the Japanese monks, bought a military vessel and started to prepare all over again.

In 743 Jian Zhen embarked with seventeen followers and a number of skilled craftsmen. But the ship was damaged in a great storm and they had to struggle ashore. After repairs, the ship set sail again but was wrecked off Zhoushan in Zhejiang. The company was stranded on an island and had to be rescued by government boats.



They were taken to Ningbo and given shelter at the nearby Ayuwang (Asoka) Monastery. Jian Zhen began to plan his third attempt.





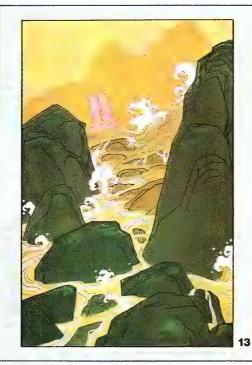
But again things went wrong. The Japanese monks were falsely accused of tricking Jian Zhen, arrested and sent off to Chang'an. However, they were so ill and weak by the time they reached Hangzhou that they were released.

Having sent people on ahead to Fuzhou with instructions to buy another ship for a fourth venture, Jian Zhen followed with the rest of his party, taking the route to Fujian through the wild but beautiful Tiantai Mountains.



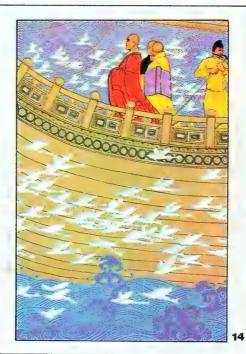


In the meantime, certain oversolicitous monks who had stayed behind in Yangzhou, having learnt of Jian Zhen's repeated failures, asked the local authorities to protect him from further privations. His party was tracked down and escorted back to Yangzhou.

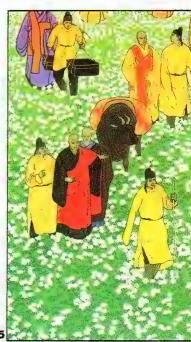


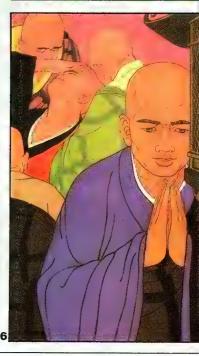
But Jian Zhen was not content to lead a quiet, sheltered life in Yangzhou. In the spring of 748 he set sail on his fifth attempt to reach Japan. South of Nantong off the eastern coast of Jiangsu the ship's company experienced a horrific typhoon — but survived.

Venturing out into the open sea, the ship passed through waters full of sea snakes, then schools of flying fish, before encountering flocks of huge birds.



After a series of miraculous escape they landed, only to find that they were if anything even further away fron Japan. They were at the southern tip of Hainan Island, where they were taken into a monastery.





By the next year, 750, they were back on the mainland. One of the Japanese monks died, the other took his leave to try to find an alternative route home. And now Jian Zhen's health deteriorated and he went blind. In 751 he returned to his home town, Yangzhou, where he was welcomed with great reverence by the religious community.





But that was still not the end of the story. In 753, the Japanese ambassador to China came to visit Jian Zhen and begged him to take the chance to accompany him back to Japan.



He and his companions slipped away in secret to prevent official interference. Thus, at the age of sixty-six, Jian Zhen began his sixth attempt.

The ambassador's fleet encountered no problems on its passage and landed in due course in southern Kyushu. Japan at last!



The party was taken to Nara, at that time the capital of Japan, where Jian Zhen preached before the emperor and his court. The doctors, architects, artists and scholars who had accompanied the monk from China also stimulated the cultural flow between the two countries.





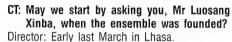
The magnificent Tang-style Toshodai Temple, built under Jian Zhen's direction, stands to this day in Nara. Jian Zhen, who was known in Japan as Ganjin, died there in 763 at the age of seventy-six, having founded the Ritsugaku Sect.

Bringing Songs and Dances from Tibet

hen the Tibet Song and Dance Ensemble paid a visit to Hong Kong, CHINA TOURISM (CT) interviewed Mr Luosang Xinba, the director, Mrs Caidan Zhuoma, a famous Tibetan singer and a veteran member of the ensemble, and Miss Zeji, the youngest of the leading dancers.

Caidan Zhuoma, now the ensemble's artistic adviser, is known throughout China for her melodious voice, unaffected attitude, enthusiasm and unique singing style. For thirty years she has sung major roles and performed as a soloist in many operas, TV plays and films. She has given performances abroad on several occasions.

Zeji, a twenty-year-old dancer from the Qamdo Art Troupe, began her dance studies when she was very young. On graduation from junior middle school, she embarked on a career as a dancer. She has worked hard to study rapa (a composite performing art which involves leaping and spinning, bell and drum dances, musical pieces and folk songs). Rapa has many variations and is difficult to master but, as a result of her efforts, Zeji is acknowledged to be one of the top rapa dancers in her troupe.



CT: What was the purpose of setting it up?

Director: To spread friendship and to communicate with audiences both in China and abroad through the performing arts. At the same time, we hope to help raise money for the China Tibet Development Foundation, which was established in 1987 in Beijing by Tibetans from five provinces. It is a non-government, non-profit-making organization. The main purpose of establishing our ensemble, of course, is to introduce Tibetan culture to people outside Tibet.

CT: Do you often perform outside Tibet?

Director: Yes. Take this tour for example. We performed in Chengdu, Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hangzhou and several other cities before coming to Hong Kong. By watching our performances, people learn more about Tibet. At the same time, it is a good opportunity for our performers to improve themselves. They are natural and unsophisticated in presentation. Our pieces are authentic, not revised or modernized, like those of some other troupes. While touring in big cities, we Tibetans and Han Chinese learn from each other and exchange our performing experiences. We also seek comments and opinions so as to improve our programme.

CT: Your performers sometimes present group dances and religious dances quite different from folk dances, isn't that so?

Director: When we thought about the programme for this tour, we bore in mind that all the pieces we perform must be strongly nationalistic, traditional and authentic.

Take baxie, for instance. This is very popular among Tibetans. Everybody — men and women, old and young — can dance baxie. At festivals or other happy occasions, people get together and dance all night long, even for days on end. Some play the xianhu (fiddle) as they dance. Women sing in antiphonal fashion or take turns to sing.

Guoxie is another popular folk dance. At festivals, people light a bonfire and dance around it in a circle for days. Men and women sing in turn, barely moving, although they never stop dancing.

We do have religious dances, but they are performed solely in monasteries. Eighty to



Another dance variety, xianzi (by Elihen Hader)

ninety percent of Tibetans are Buddhists. When such dances take place, the dancers are monks and the spectators regard them as incarnations of the gods they portray. The development of the Tibetan culture has, since ancient times, been closely linked with Buddhism. The educated monks and lamas all live in monasteries, and that is where Tibet's historical records are preserved. But it is true that you may detect a certain religious flavour in baxie and quoxie dances.

CT:Do the Tibetan people like religious dances?
Director: Very much. Such dance ceremonies last for days on end. They are also rich in variety. The dancers may have masks on their heads or faces or be disguised as deities. And the movements vary greatly. At religious festivals, the faithful go to the monasteries to pay homage to the gods and receive their benediction, then they go and watch the dances with utter devotion.

CT: Mrs Caidan Zhuoma, would you mind telling us how long you have been a professional singer?

C.Z.: More than thirty years.

CT: What kind of songs do you specialize in?

C.Z.: Tibetan folk songs. There are several categories of folk songs, such as *shange* (sung in the fields during or after work), *muge* (pastoral songs), *xiange* (sung accompanied by fiddles) and *huxie* (sung with clappers). I also sing *zangxi* (Tibetan opera).

CT: Do you often perform outside Tibet?

C.Z.: Mainly in Tibet, but from time to time I join the touring troupe. Occasionally I take part in





A performance of rapa (by Dan Zeng)

important performances staged on national festival days in Beijing.

CT: Do you think you will work with this ensemble for long?

C.Z.: That depends. I'll stay as long as I am needed.

CT: Miss Zeji, you were brought up in Qamdo in northeastern Tibet, weren't you?

Zeji: Yes, that's right.

CT: When did you start your career as a dancer?

Zeji: When I was fourteen. But I was fond of dancing from when I was very little. On graduation from junior middle school, I passed the entrance examination to a cultural troupe and I have worked there as a dancer ever since.

CT:Are you from the town or the countryside?
Zeji: From the town. My mother is a school accountant.

CT:How long did it take you to learn rapa? Zeji: Three years.

CT:How did you manage to master such difficult movements?

Zeji: I actually learned most of them when I was still in my home town. Rapa is popular in thirteen counties and I learned more than a hundred movements from those areas. I've also made up some new steps myself, so I can now do over two hundred. Some of the movements really took a lot of effort to master.

movements really took a lot of effort to master.

CT: What sort of difficulties did you experience?

Zeji: At first, I felt sick after only two or three spins, but it gradually got better. However, if I made too many spins, I sometimes used to faint. And when I practised hard I would feel a pain in my side the next day and be unable to get up!

CT: Do you have breathing problems when you dance at such a high altitude as the Tibetan Plateau?

Zeji: No, I'm used to it.

CT: Where have you performed so far?

Zeji: To be frank, this is the first time I've performed outside Tibet. I've only been to Lhasa to perform before, nowhere else, and that was for a competition. I work mainly in Qamdo.

CT: Do you perform mainly on stage or in other surroundings?

Zeji: Sometimes on stage, sometimes just on the bare ground, particularly when I am performing out in the countryside. Often I dance with the local people. We are always on good terms with our audience.

CT: Mrs Caidan Zhuoma, I was wondering if your name has any specific meaning?

C.Z.: Yes, Caidan means 'longevity' and Zhuoma 'fairy'. Put them together and you have 'a fairy with a long life'.

CT: Miss Zeji, what about your name?

Zeji: Zeji refers to my date of birth — July 8. But it also means happiness and a long life.

CT: What kind of dances do Tibetan youngsters like most? And what do they dance themselves?

Zeji: Young Tibetans are fond of watching modern dance and ballet. They like disco dancing but, when they try it, you can easily detect traces of Tibetan dances. In the town where I live, we hold dance parties several times a week. But young people from the countryside still stick to their traditional dances such as quozhuana.

CT: Are there any taboos connected with traditional dances?

Director: Well, yes and no. For instance, when you watch a religious dance, you must be wearing clean clothes and be in a devout frame of mind



Caidan Zhuoma in full voice (by Elihen Hader)

and so on. In the past, women performers not only had to face the audience, they also had to dance with great restraint. Their movements could not be too extreme; their hands could not be lifted above their shoulders, for example. But all that has changed. Stage performances are different from ordinary folk dances.

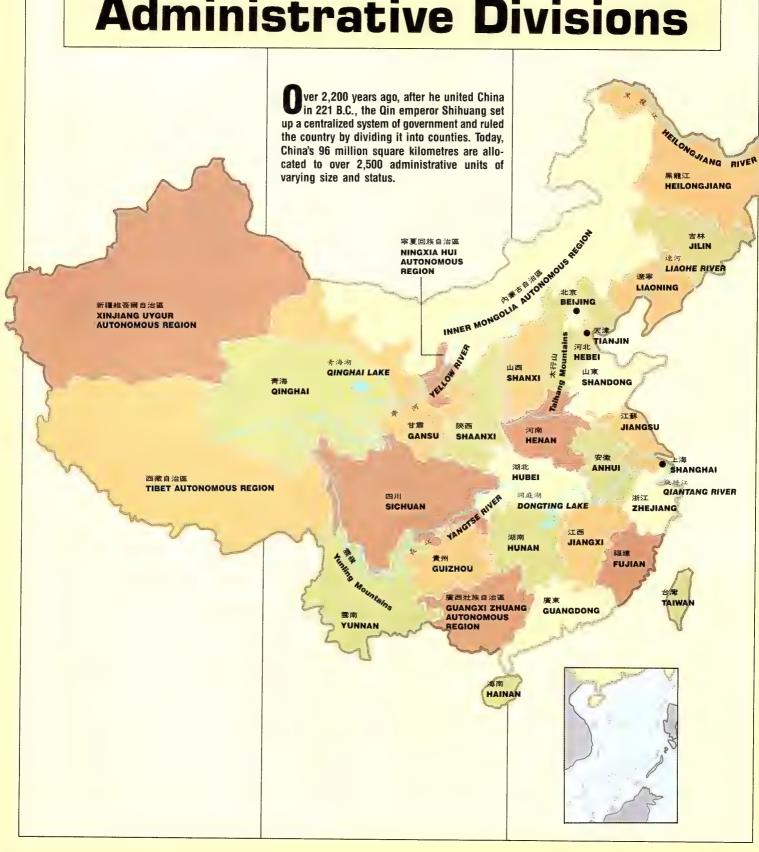
Translated by Wang Mingjie

Interview conducted by M.K.





China's Administrative Divisions



Province (sheng)

The word *sheng* first originated as the term for an important unit of central government. Under the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), it then became the name of the highest administrative division of an area. The term was used throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties and down to the present day, although the boundaries, number and names of provinces have obviously changed over the ages. The names of six of the present twenty-three provinces — Shaanxi, Henan, Gansu, Jiangxi, Sichuan and Yunnan — date from the Yuan dynasty.

Most province names are actually derived from the geographical location, especially their position relative to a lake or river. For example, Hebei and Henan are named for their positions north and south of the Huanghe (Yellow River); he means 'river', while bei and nan mean 'north' and 'south', respectively. Liaoning's liao comes from the River Liaohe, the major river in the province, while ning is 'tranquillity'. Thus Liaoning means 'May the River Liaohe be forever tranquil'. Jiangxi, jiang meaning 'river' and xi 'west', refers to the area southwest of the River Yangtse. Heilongjiang and Zhejiang get their names from their major rivers (Zhejiang was actually once the name of the River Qiantang). Likewise. Qinghai is named after Lake Qinghai. Hunan and Hubei are so called as they flank Lake Dongting (hu meaning 'lake'), while Shandong and Shanxi lie either side of the Taihangshan or Taihang Mountains (shan equals 'mountain', while dong and xi are 'east' and 'west', respectively). Yunnan takes its name from the Yunling Mountains situated in the northwestern corner of the province.

Autonomous Regions (zizhiqu)

An autonomous region and a municipality (dealt with below) enjoy exactly the same status as a province. Autonomous regions, of which there are five, have been set up where a certain minority people is present in very large concentrations over a very large area. The first was the Inner Mongolia A.R. (1947), followed by the Xinjiang Uygur A.R. (1955), the Ningxia Hui A.R. and the Guangxi Zhuang A.R. (both in 1958), and the Tibet A.R. (1965).

Municipality (zhixiashi)

The full term actually means 'municipality directly under the central government'. The national

廣東 GUANGDONG capital, Beijing, and the major coastal cities Shanghai and Tianjin are municipalities.

District or Prefecture (diqu), Autonomous Prefecture (zizhizhou), League (meng)

A province is made up of districts. Many provinces and all the autonomous regions also contain autonomous prefectures. This latter term designates an area — still quite sizeable — where there is a concentration of one or more minority peoples, and it has the same status as a district.

A league, again of equivalent standing, is an administrative division specific to Inner Mongolia and was devised by the Manchus during the Qing dynasty to bind the Mongolians under their rule (see CHINA TOURISM no. 83, Potpourri).

County (xian), Autonomous County (zizhixian), Banner (qi), Autonomous Banner (zizhiqi), Special District (tequ)

The next sub-division down is the county, the oldest of all the administrative units, dating from the Qin dynasty when the country was divided into a thousand counties. Some of the county names of those days still survive: for example, Lüxian County in Shandong and Lishi County in Shanxi. China now has over two thousand counties. Top of the list is Sichuan, with over 160.

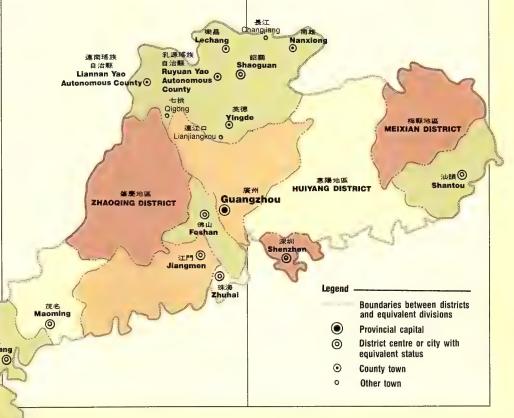
Other administrative units with equal status include the autonomous county, banner, autonomous banner and special district. An autonomous county fulfils the same purpose as an autonomous prefecture; it is just smaller. Yunnan, with the greatest number of minority peoples, not surprisingly also has the largest number of autonomous prefectures and counties.

Like the league, the banner and the autonomous banner are specific to Inner Mongolia for historical reasons.

The last division, the special district, is a county-level designation given only to four places in Guizhou. It should be distinguished from the **Special Economic Zone**, of which there are five. These SEZs are the whole of Hainan Province, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou in Guangdong Province, and Xiamen in Fujian Province. Set up to promote economic development in the coastal regions, SEZs are governed by different laws than the rest of China, and population movements are controlled by the provincial government.

Counties are further divided into towns and villages. Government offices are set up at most levels except villages. Some places, such as the provincial capital, contain the offices of the provincial and district administration as well as the city's own local government. The first two offices are equipped to handle matters affecting foreigners, both tourists and businessmen. In some places, the tourism authorities also come under such an office and foreign visitors can turn to it for assistance. At county level, only those places that attract many tourists are likely to have an office able to assist foreigners. Where there is no specific office responsible for foreigners and their problems, all matters should be directed to the local government office.

Translated by M.K.





Rivers of the North

o link in with this month's major theme of exploring the Huanghe (Yellow River), we present a veritable paean to the 'father of the Chinese nation'. However, the river as portrayed by Zhang Chengzhi is not the tremulous infant of Qinghai, but a mature torrent, awe-inspiring in its power, along its course through Shaanxi Province.

This extract is taken from Rivers of the North, Zhang's best-known story besides The Gallant Black Horse, which caused a sensation when it first appeared. These two stories won the second and third national novelette awards, respectively.

Full of the inexorable rhythm and momentum of the great rivers of northern China, with yellow as the elemental colour for the setting, this novelette or novella reveals the wide and varied inner world of a young man seeking to capture the soul of the rivers, ostensibly for a post-graduate exam thesis: 'he felt these rivers could combine to form a portrait of half of China, the broad and mysterious north'. But, as will be seen from this extract from chapter 1, Zhang's choice of language throughout is heavy with symbolism, equating one man's experience with that of the whole of Chinese society.

Zhang Chengzhi was born in Beijing in 1948. As an 'educated youth', he was sent to live on the grasslands of Inner Mongolia for four years, which he found a rich and formative experience. Later, after enrolling in the History Department at Beijing University in 1971, he deepened his knowledge of the peoples of northwestern China through research. Almost every year he visits his Mongolian 'family' and his friends the goldminers on the banks of the Huanghe, the farmers of the Loess Plateau, and the herdsmen of the Yili Grasslands and the Altay Mountains. This background, allied with his love of poetry and painting, have enabled him to produce works poems and prose - of great lyricism.

Turning around, he gripped the rack once again. This was the same road, but now it looked unfamiliar to him. Time really does erase everything; you've managed to forget even that afternoon you spent walking this road, hungry. You were only twenty years old then, with not even ten yuan in your shirt pocket. After getting off the truck at the small town of Qingyangping you came walking along this dirt road. Not only had you not had any stuffed buckwheat flatcakes to eat; you hadn't had a drop of water to drink since dawn. You walked for so long, passing by row after row of those old loess caps, asking anyone you met,

"I'm going to the Yellow River; how far is it?" It was the same here as it had been on the grasslands of Altay: the further you walked, the further people told you it was, a different distance each time you asked. From fifteen kilometres to twenty, and then from ten back to twenty. Now you think it may have been twenty kilometres altogether, because it took you fully half a day. Your sneakers were filled with fine yellow dust; you drank from the clearer ditches. Then you caught sight of an old man sitting in a grass hut selling watermelons, and gritting your teeth you pulled out fifty fen to buy one. Chatting with the old man, you told him you had come from Yan'an and had also been to the oil wells at Yanchuan and Yanzhang. The old man said, "From Mizhi a good wife and from Suide a lad, but the girls from Yan'an-Yanchuan-Yanzhang are the worst of the bad." This rather deflated you, but the watermelon was sweet, at least. For the remainder of your walk you picked unripe jujubes of the sort called riverside-grown because they grew along the western banks of the Yellow River. Since the redfaced young man had been selling jujubes at the city gate market, you guessed immediately that he was from Hedi Village. On that day, however, the unripe jujubes were green and bitter, and they made your stomach swell. At least they assuaged your hunger. Happily you sang "Some guerrillas came down from Mount Hengshan". You were free as a bird, daring to jump down cliffs to find shortcuts to the next stretch of road. You even chased a grey rabbit, which seemed brightly coloured, even dazzling, in this world of loess. You didn't catch it, though; you just worked yourself into a great sweat and lay panting on the hot, dry, yellow earth. And then you really tired yourself out climbing a mountain; the dirt on the road leading up it was soft and squishy, covered with a cracked dry crust but yielding underneath. Setting your jaw, you climbed on, the blinding, venomous sunlight making your throat smoke. You regretted not having saved half of the watermelon to bring along. But at that time your life was like a just-lit torch: your four limbs were wonderfully elastic. You knew that your heart was in fine shape, that your pulse was strong and steady. So you laid a wager of brute strength against that mountain of yellow earth that you could go straight to the top without pausing once. Full of confidence, you set your foot to the surface of the dried loess mud with its network of fissures, and working the joints of your knees you began your step-by-step climb. And then, and then - when you reached the top, you saw the Yellow River.

Suddenly he heard the girl cry shrilly: "Look! The Yellow — River!"

He gave a start, and quickly turned to look. The "Liberation"* had just reached the top of the mountain. This must be that very same mountain of loess — you've forgotten it, he quietly blamed

himself, holding his breath. The Northern Shaanxi Plateau was cut off here, throwing itself bravely into the canyon before it. Staring, he noticed how all the ravines at the edge of the plateau straightened out before leaping into the great dim gorge, the legions of loess knolls advancing behind like the crests of waves. Excited, he muttered to himself, "Hei, Yellow River, Yellow River." In the depths of the canyon the faintly glimmering. mighty river came meandering from the far horizon. The lofty blue mountains of Shanxi Province were like a blurry wall standing gravely and silently on the opposite side of the canyon, looking on as the waves of loess ridges and knolls spilled themselves with abandon over the edge. The great river lay deep at the bottom of the canyon, vast and obscure, majestically looking on as Nature bent its waist to worship it. A moist, refreshing river wind caressed the back of the truck; he had already gone forward to the back of the cab and was grasping the rack with paralyzed fingers.

He had not lost this memory. He had kept it safe these ten years and more. He recalled clearly how as a young buck, still wet behind the ears, he had stood, eyes staring and jaw slack, completely awestruck, on the summit of this mountain and stared at the vast, powerful river which split the continent, separating the world of loess from the world of boulders. Now he understood: it was precisely this memory which had created in him without his knowledge the desire to return here, and which had pushed him, step by step, towards the kingdom of geography. "I must pass the exam!" he swore to himself under his breath.

"What? Hey, what'd you say?" Suddenly he noticed that the girl with whom he'd spoken earlier was now standing right next to him, holding on to the rack at the back of the cab.

. . .

The "Liberation" came to the bottom of the great canyon. Swerving to the right, abandoning the muddy water and shallows of the Wuding River, it entered a wood of deep green. The Yellow River slid swiftly and steadily southwards, the seemingly swollen surface of the water a vast expanse of white. The rocky mountains of Shanxi on the opposite bank were still a wall of blue. The redfaced young man stood up looking as if he had something in mind to do, and slapping the dust off his clothes picked up his yellow canvas bag. The innocent face of the young man told him: They had arrived at Hedi Village.

They came to the riverbank. As soon as he had emerged from the cave home of the red-faced young man he had taken off like a shooting star in the direction of the riverbank, taking great strides. Only when he came to where the muddy waves splashed against the beach did he look back and see the girl's swaying figure. She's just like a willow, he thought to himself; that camera they've given her weighs her down so much she can only teeter along. He paced the bank, stepping on the egg-shaped stones, which clattered against each other. The viscous water, flashing and trembling, roared as it flowed past like heavy molten metal. It sets the whole broad gorge to quaking, he thought with amazement; maybe someday the mountains on both sides will come tumbling down. This really is the great river of the north. Far off

he espied a tree trunk, branches and leaves still clinging to it, being twirled around in the current, now sinking, now rising. Keeping his eyes on its green leaves he began to run, thinking to match speed with the current. Shouting in his abandon, he felt as if he had dissolved into the hubbub, dissolved on the surface of the river and swept through the long gorge.

She had just mounted a distance lens on her camera, drawing the lens hood forward, and had adjusted the aperture and shutter speed. Wiping her sweat and panting, she put on a burst of speed to run after him. Then she noticed he was standing perfectly still on a small spit that seemed to be travelling upstream.

"Hey! What're you doing?" she called cheerfully, lightly switching the safety on the shutter back to "on" - she had already taken the first picture. She was certain that the multilavered complexity of the Yellow River water, the dim blue mountains on the opposite bank and the silvery light at the confluence of the Wuding and the Yellow River in the distance would make this a very successful shot on her Kodak film. The small guesthouse in Hedi Village was nice and clean, and all her worries had disappeared.

"Hey, say something, graduate student!" she joked, coming up alongside her travelling companion. "I remember it all now," he said. "I knew that as soon as I came here I'd be able to

remember'

"Remember what? The geography lecture notes?" she asked with keen interest. She longed to make a few lighthearted jokes with this tall youth.

"No. This rock," he replied. "More than ten years ago, this is where I dived into the river from."

"For a swim?" She looked at him, her head to one side. Standing there silently, he let out a long sigh. Should he tell her? "I got on the wrong truck; you see, at that time the long-distance bus was actually a 'Liberation' truck," he began hesitantly. "I'd been to Yanchuan to see a classmate, and I wanted to return to Beijing. From Suide you have to go to Jun Ferry before you can get to Shanxi, which is on the way to Beijing, but I ended up on the wrong truck. That truck didn't go north to Jun Ferry; instead, it followed the Wuding River to this place. The road had been washed out by a rainstorm; the truck stayed at Qingyangping. In Qingyangping I heard that there was a ferry that crossed from here, so I walked twenty kilometres to get here." He stared fixedly at the river flowing away off to the south, which in the rays of the westering sun seemed as if it were brimming with molten copper. He caught sight of the long shadow the girl cast on the metallic surface of the water, his own next to it. Tell her, he thought, "And from here — this very spot was where I dived in — I swam across the Yellow River."

She was silent for a bit, then asked softly, "Why didn't you wait for the ferry?"

The boat had been due back the next day, and it was going to wait another eight days before crossing again. He had been able to see it resting afar off against the opposite bank. He'd ridden in the back of trucks to go to where his old classmates were working in the countryside: Starting out from Xinjiang, he'd planned to go to Balikun, northern Shaanxi, and Shanxi, and in the end return to Beijing. He'd wanted to see the world, see how his classmates and how people in general lived.

The girl added by way of explanation, "I mean. to swim across - that's terribly dangerous. You didn't want to wait for the boat?'

"I didn't have any money," he explained. "I asked in the village. To stay at the inn and eat fine noodles cost 90 fen a day; to eat coarse noodles cost 60 fen. I couldn't afford it at that time."

Moved, she gazed at him. "You're really brave," she said.

"Sit down and have a rest," she suggested, as she spread her handkerchief on the yellow sand and sat down herself. The Yellow River flowed before them, stubbornly rushing along. It's not water flowing in this river, nor waves, she thought to herself. "Hey! Look at this Yellow River!" she shouted. "There aren't any wavecrests on it. It's not water, it's not waves; it's chunk upon chunk of solid, primeval fluid. What do you say to that?"

Chunk upon chunk, Hearing this, he thought to himself: This girl describes it in a very strange way, but the even stranger thing is that her description is very apt. Chunk upon chunk of semisolid, slightly rounded yellow fluid moving steadily forward, simple and well-behaved but steadfastly intrepid. And the Northern Shaanxi Plateau jumps down, spills down into its embrace. "That's a very interesting way to put it," he said. "I mean, very descriptive."

"I'm a photographer. In my line of work, one must continually hone one's senses."

"But I think the Yellow River - " He paused. He wanted to give it a try, too. But my senses are not the same as yours, little girl. He felt that unrestrainable pressure building in himself again. Forget it, he warned himself.

"What do you think it's like?" She looked him in the face, interested. He must be a very feeling young man; look at that face, so moving. Taking up her camera, she adjusted the aperture. "Tell me! If you describe it well, I can put your feelings on film." Narrowing her eyes, she challenged him.

"I feel - this Yellow River is like my father!" he suddenly muttered, his voice rough and muted and trembling slightly. "Father", he said. What is wrong with me? Why am I telling her this? But he knew he couldn't keep it in. The girl before him was tempting him to say it. Perhaps it was that scent she had and those narrowed black eves of hers that were tempting him to speak. He was amazed that in the depths of his heart lay the desire to say all of this to a girl. But he couldn't hold it in.

"Ever since I was very young...I've had no father. I forgot about the whole idea of having a father for many years. He abandoned my mother - the dirty bastard." Having spit out this curse, he closed his mouth firmly. The blue-grey mountains of Shanxi on the opposite bank seemed to shift slightly, and now they turned jet black. Look at the chunks in the river, she thought, silently staring at it. They've solidified. Ai, people's hearts.

He lifted his head. The Yellow River, stretching across his whole field of vision, rushed along, its entire surface reflecting red. The river is burning, he thought to himself. The evening sun, now sunk behind the Northern Shaanxi Plateau, had ignited a strip of clouds, which now scattered over the canyon. The whole river's turned red; it's burning.

It may be that it's burning for me, he thought. The coppery waves were now clearly outlined, rising heavily one after another. His eyes felt scorched by this world of red. He was reminded of Van Gogh's The Starry Night; before, he had never deigned to give the painting a thought, but now he understood. In Van Gogh's eyes, the starry sky

was like a twisting, tumbling river; in his own young eyes, the Yellow River seemed like a fierce fire burning on the land of the north. The towering peaks in Shanxi across the river were dyed red; he could hear this divine river of fire calling him. My father, he thought dazedly, standing and staring at the stream, you are revealing your true feelings to me. He unbuttoned and removed his jacket.

Staggering, she rushed over and took hold of

"What are you doing?" she shouted, gasping. "Surely you're not going to dive in!"

Turning around, he gazed at the girl, puzzled. "No! It's too dangerous!" She shook her head firmly. What a proud man he is; he thinks I don't believe his tale of heroism. "I know you're capable of swimming across.... You've already swum across once," she said, grasping his hand and not letting go. "But there is no need to do it now; it's too dangerous!" She was shouting, hoping to drown out the thundering of the river.

Carefully he withdrew his hand and sized her up. What was this girl's problem? It seemed that every time a real man came to an important pass, he must not have any women about. They always stirred things up, made one feel uncomfortable. They certainly had this ability.

"Don't swim across; it's too dangerous," she pleaded, lifting her face towards him. "Let's just talk for a while. Or we could take a few more photos, and you could think over your notes while looking at the river scenery." The heavy camera with its bulky zoom lens was swinging in front of her chest; it seemed to him the weight of the camera would break her long neck. He thought of helping her carry the metallic object.

"Go and take your pictures; go take a walk over there," he muttered huskily, subdued. "I have a little private business; you'd best be off."

"No!" she yelled. "This is the Yellow River! Do you understand?" Clenching her small hands into tiny, laughable fists, she waved them about.

At this point the Yellow River took flame again. The coppery waves rose slowly, and the entire canyon seemed to fuse into a single brilliant flame. The valley was filled with rising mists, and he saw before him a ball of reddish colour that was at once rushing, twirling, leaping, roaring and crooning. It's calling me, he thought; look at these rolling orbs of colour. My father, the Yellow River, is calling me. Quickly, he cast away his jacket and took off his trousers, and rolling them into a ball he walked towards the girl. "No, it's too dangerous," she pleaded, raising her head. Again he clearly heard the trust in her words. He felt a stab in his heart. "Take them; wait for me," he said quietly. "See

^{*}A "Liberation" brand truck.

where the ferry is moored on the opposite bank? I'll take that ferry back." Seeing her hair blowing in the wind, it took all his strength to resist the temptation to reach out and stroke it. It's getting late, he thought, and stealing a last glance at her hair, he swiftly turned and ran towards the flame that rushed along before him.

She stood up, tightly hugging the bundle of rumpled clothes he had given her, which smelled strongly of male sweat and tobacco. Oh dear, she thought, surprised. I believe I've fallen in love with him. But she chased this thought away immediately. A solemn expression gradually stole into her black eyes. Slowly she lifted her heavy camera, letting the wad of clothes drop on to the sand. Quickly checking the left and right of her field of vision, she let the cold metal viewfinder come to rest lightly yet solidly against her eyebrow. Without making a sound, she adjusted the focus ring on the lens, silently analyzing the interaction of the picture in her viewfinder with the feelings flashing through her mind.

A scene of beauty met her eye: the clamorous river overcast with rose-tinged clouds, its waves surging turbulently, the angles of their crests clearly defined. In the middle of her frame a halfnaked, broad-shouldered man was running, arms outstretched, towards the mighty torrent.

A slight, nervous smile appeared at the corners of her mouth. At the exact moment when the man threw himself into the water, his body horizontal, she firmly pressed the shutter button.

He steered himself straight towards the mountains on the opposite bank, his two arms threshing the water evenly. I'll swim just this way, he thought, taking care not to stroke too hard, and also being careful to kick with a steady rhythm. You always like to use too much force. I remember that time I swam in just the same way, doing the breaststroke, keeping my head above water. One has to keep an eye on the waves that come down from upstream. And one must absolutely not get cramps. He felt his entire body soaking comfortably in the warm river water, but at the same time his every nerve was taut. When you clambered on to the bank on the Shanxi shore, you jumped up excitedly and yelled "Hurrah!" but you did not know that elsewhere a twelve-year-old girl was wiping the blood from her father's body with a towel. "What an idiot you are - " he muttered to himself, but a wave hit him straight in the face, forcing him to swallow the last half of the sentence. Only now do I understand that it was due to the protection and the indulgence of my father, the Yellow River, that I succeeded in swimming across. With this thought he paused for a moment. The water was highly buoyant; he enjoyed the sensation of his body being supported by the turbulent swells. It's true; the Yellow River is protecting me, he thought. Again a frisson of excitement swept through his heart. Then he took careful aim once more at the Shanxi riverbank, centreing on the majestic Lüliang Range. As waves struck him he exhaled, inhaling as they carried him upon their crests. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the drops of water rolling off the muscles of his shoulders. I am grateful to you, girl reporter; you gave me some valuable criticism,

and at the same time showed faith in me. Despite everything, you could understand me. Yes, it's true: At that time I was an honest-to-goodness Red Guard, but I never beat anyone, much less that janitor father of yours. However, I am willing to assume my share of responsibility. I will never forget your story. He felt serious and subdued, but at the same time he felt his heart had become richer. He focused his attention again on swimming, and now he caught sight of the midstream.

Suddenly he was in it, and he felt the full force of the Yellow River sweeping him recklessly along. A small fish brushed against his thigh, sending a shock like electricity through his body. A few more fish hit him, each one like a bolt of clarity. He could almost hear the voice of the schools of fish. But the surface of the midstream was quite flat, sliding along like a piece of solid matter. I admit my responsibility to you, twelve-year-old girl, he thought, since at that time I jumped into the water without a single misgiving, carefree as a little duck, and since I didn't know then how to understand and care about the suffering in this world. He discovered he was being swept southward by the powerful midstream, and pointing himself anew towards the opposite bank, he set to swimming. Yellow River, he called silently, I am no longer that simple little duck. The Yellow River responded with its rumble, and the cliffs on the Shanxi bank drew nearer. I'm already close to the rock wall, he thought; the rock wall is moving, going towards the north. Taking a deep breath, he swam with intense concentration.

Gradually he felt his deltoids becoming sore. I'm tired, he thought with a slight sense of alarm. Last time I didn't feel tired at all; I remember only ease, relaxation, comfort, liveliness. Now you're tired only halfway across, and moreover you didn't walk twenty kilometres beforehand, and in your stomach you have a fine stuffed buckwheat cake, not unripe jujubes. Buddy, you're getting old. An icy chill suddenly enveloped his heart. More than ten years have flowed past, just like the water of the Yellow River, yet although you are not fully an adult, your flesh is betraying you. Don't you dare betray my youth! "Damn it, while I live, I won't let you betray it!" he cursed out loud. Pulling himself to the top of a wave, he took a breath of air, his cheeks seeming to burn with fever. He remembered how the girl had blamed him. You're always cursing, he thought to himself. In these ten-odd years, you've become a barbarian. But in that time how much have I experienced.... I've become a barbarian, but I've also become civilized. I've received a university education in the speciality of Chinese language, I'm going to be a graduate student in geography; it's not that I don't know how to be refined and gentle. But don't curse again in front of that girl, he admonished himself. You don't know whether she's changed or not during the same stretch of time. You don't know whether her surprising hardness and her gaze have betrayed her during this time. You must be a bit gentler with her. A girl who has had such an experience at the age of twelve needs some warmth, and that includes warm language. He swam with renewed effort. By now he had almost passed the midstream with its seemingly solid, sliding surface and had caught sight of the current on the eastern side, which was shallower and slower but which had large waves.

His heart began to thump with excitement: The

eastern bank was already quite close. He felt a lump in his throat, and his breathing grew somewhat laboured. Ah, my father, the Yellow River, has protected me once more. I can swim the last two hundred metres slowly and steadily. My body has not betrayed me, and my deltoids have overcome their weariness; they have accepted the orders of my youth. I have not yet become old, he thought happily. I can help that girl out: I can find the rat who took the initiative in beating her father, with his airs like a lord, and teach him a lesson. "Son of a bitch!" he swore again. At this moment he emerged from the midstream. The current slowed abruptly, and he began again to take care lest the waves swamp him. But the business of teaching that little lord a lesson should be left to her boyfriend or husband, he mused; as for me, I'll just invite her to a meal. And while we're eating, I'll sing her a Kazakh love song from the banks of the Ertix River, make her feel that most of the people in the world are good after all and that she hasn't been wrong about me. And then I'll devote my energies completely to the study of geography.

Swimming through the surging waves, he now came to a spot about twenty metres from the riverbank. The rock face before him, covered with green moss, seemed to sweep past swiftly. This water is moving too fast, he thought. At this instant he caught sight of a great boulder sticking up from the bottom of the river that was advancing on him swiftly. Curling up his body, he sprung himself away from the rock with his feet, and it flew past, half submerged, half exposed. It's flowing too fast, carrying me downstream. He grew anxious. With determination he drew up his shoulders, gathering his energy, and swam the crawl in a sprint straight towards the Shanxi rock wall, the green moss of which he felt was already within reach. But the river water still carried him in its grip swiftly downstream. The fissures and lines in the rock face before him flashed past so fast it hurt his eyes. His arms and hands suddenly became soft and paralyzed, and he felt a leadlike weight pressing on his shoulders. The pain in his muscles was unbearable. As the current swept him in its embrace along the rock face, he espied another terrible boulder looming up in his path. He let out a strangled roar. He despised the boulder, for he knew that victory was already his. Using all the strength in his body, he hurled himself towards the shore. As he saw the corner of the steep boulder flash past, he seized hold of it. Immediately his body was forced parallel to the shore by the current and was flipped and tossed about as a tremendous force pulled on his arms. With grim determination he clung to the boulder with his right hand as he noticed the turbid white wake that gurgled from around his shoulders and the soles of his feet.

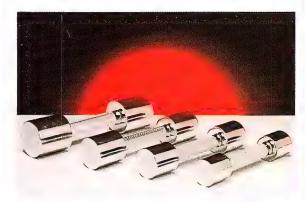
He closed his eyes contentedly. The warm, sandy water flowed past, caressing his body, following the direction pointed out by it. As the muddy yellow waves slapped against him, the sound all around him became a roar. O Yellow River, my father, he thought, I thank you. And then he pulled his two legs out of the current and stepped firmly on to the solid bank.

Translated by Stephen Fleming

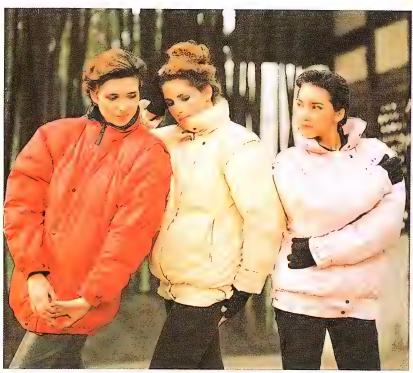
Taken from *Chinese Literature* (Summer 1987) and reproduced by kind permission of Chinese Literature Press, Beijing

Sichuan Sporting Goods

The Winners' Choice



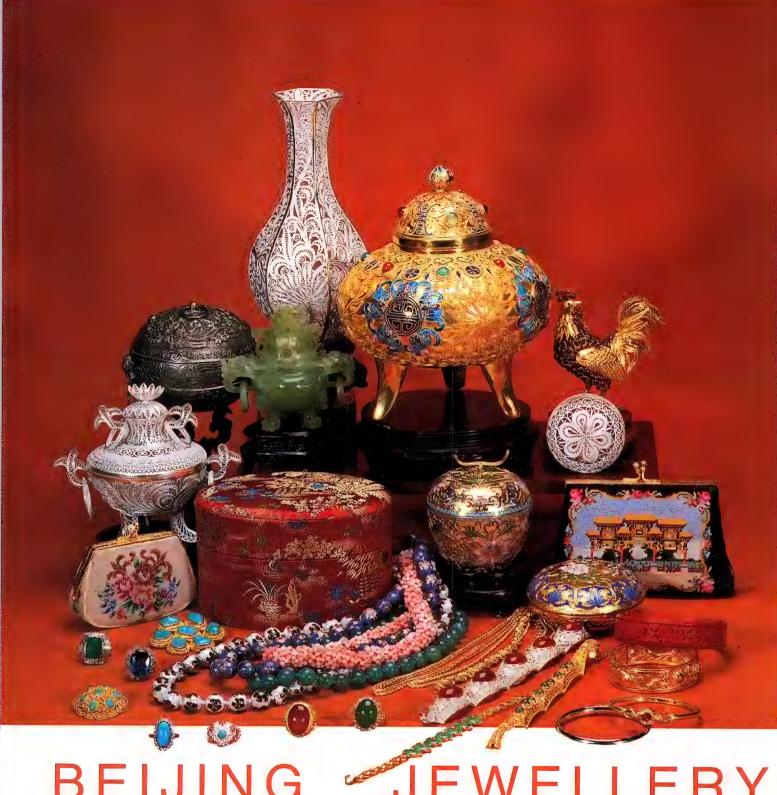












JEWELLERY BEIJING



Founded in 1965, our company is the first of its kind in China specially engaged in import and export of jewellery and ornaments. Our main items include gems, jadeite, diamonds, gold and silver ornaments, jade ornaments and articles, cloisonné ornaments and articles, lacquer, ceramics, carved wooden and bone engraved ornaments, as well as exquisite handicrafts such as petit-point handbags and articles, brocade articles, etc.

> CHINA NATIONAL ARTS & CRAFTS IMPORT & EXPORT CORP., BEIJING JEWELLERY BRANCH

22 Fu Wai Street, Beijing, China Tel: 89-1315 Cable: PEKJEWECO BEIJING Telex: 22188 PEKJW CN Fax: 8314073

Sichuan Silk

The production of silk and cocoons in Sichuan has a history of 4,000 years. During the Qin and Han dynasties, (221 B.C.—A.D. 24), silk was already being exported to India, Iran, Afghanistan and Japan. Today, Sichuan's silk exports include:

Silk, cocoons, raw materials, silk fabrics, fabrics blended of silk and rayon, silk floss, garments, embroidered blouses, embroidered screens and other embroidered items, tablecloths, silk squares, scarfs, handkerchiefs and bedding.



China Silk Corporation, Sichuan Branch

65 Luoguo Lane, Chengdu, Sichuan, China Telex: 60106 CSSB CN Tel: 29565, 25301

Cable: 5729 Chengdu, SISICORP



Experiencing Guang

If you are visiting Guangdong Province, one place you shouldn't miss is Guangzhou's famous Qingping Market. To me this was one of the most exciting and interesting places on my trip, and even if your time is limited, it is worthwhile to join an organised weekend tour from Hong Kong. If you stay in one of the numerous hotels on Shamian Island you will most likely come across the market, since the north bridge off the island literally funnels visitors into the darkish alley, hardly twenty feet wide.

A dense veil of noise and odours instantly flooded my senses as I pushed my way into the crowded entrance. A huge part of the market is shaded by a roof made of translucent, corrugated plastic which sheds a dim twilight of red, yellow and blue, thus intensifying the colourful

scene even more.

Dried goods of all sorts are arranged in three rows, leaving two walkways in between which lead to the second section of the market where live animals, fresh meat, and vegetables and fruits are sold.

As I made my way into the turmoil of screaming, laughing sellers and buyers I passed stacks of dried mushrooms, one of the highlights of Cantonese cuisine, various roots, dried fish, and huge black bundles of seaweed.

Among the more familiar merchandise my eyes also found specimens of unknown animals which appeared to me rather like tiny, domesticated forms of the more threatening creatures which come across our way during rare nightmares. Quite unusual were the sacks of roasted scorpions and cockroach-like bugs, lined up with displays of dried seahorses, shark's fins, gigantic centipedes, toadheaded lizards and neatly coiled tiny snakes. Deer antlers in a multitude of shapes lined the shelves among dried bear's paws, skeletons of lynxes, cats, pangolins, even monkeys.

During a visit with a Chinese friend I was told that almost everything required by the practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine is for sale at the market, a relief to me, for I had thought that I was looking at what ordinary people eat for mere nutritional purposes! From my friend I learned that traditional Chinese medicine has devised innumerable recipes involving plants, herbs, and parts of animals' bodies, as well as minerals. Most of these have to be collected under certain circumstances and prepared according to cryptically elaborated procedures, stretching sometimes over a period of weeks or even months.

The theory of traditional Chinese medicine holds that diseases are caused by the unbalanced flow of life forces inside the human body. These forces, also called 'winds', can be of hot or cold, wet or dry nature and vary from disease to disease, either too weak or too strong, thus leaving the organs of the human body either





hou's Qingping Market

without energy or clogged up by the presence of too much hot or cold 'wind'. Logically the different ingredients of a remedy have to be combined according to their classification as *yin* or *yang*, which indicates the basic categorization and their particular impact on the organs to be treated.

I was told that, more than the cure of an actual disease, traditional Chinese medicine aims at the stimulation and support of a weakened body and is thus at its best as a prophylactic. And almost everything sold in this market can be listed as food medicine. Every time Chinese people eat a meal, most likely some of the ingredients in their food will be added solely because they are believed to further their health in one way or another. Any food can be medicine when seen from this perspective. Many old people, especially, eat according to a careful set of dos and don'ts.

Certain sorts of meat, depending on their rating as 'hot' or 'cold', are preferably to be eaten either in winter or in summer. Veal for instance should be consumed in winter, whereas chicken, beef and pork are the choices for summer. Some animal organs are said to weaken or strengthen the corresponding organs of the human body at different seasons. Thus eating liver weakens the liver in the spring and eating heart weakens the heart in the autumn.

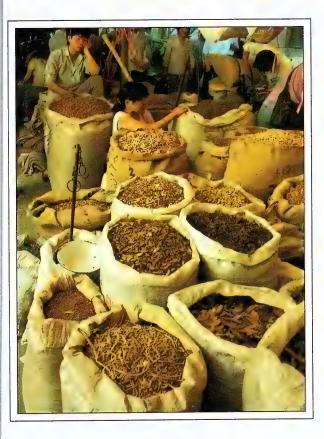
Many ingredients and spices should generally be added as stimulants and most of them are, among other things, regarded as aphrodisiacs. Thinly sliced deer antler added to soups and other dishes is said to strengthen the bones but is, like the famous ginseng root, esteemed as a general aphrodisiac. The applications of ginseng are numerous and the remedial effects claimed range from curing depression to curing heart conditions. Turtles, eaten regularly, promise longevity, and an emulsion made of ground turtle shell fights weak kidneys and gallstones. The everyday medical knowledge passed down unceasingly from generation to generation is tremendous, and to acquire a little knowledge of the theories and

applications involved added an extra dimension to my image of China and its people's deep-rooted traditions and culture.

This walk through Qingping Market opened up to me some of the most striking features of Chinese life. In the market one stumbles across a living tradition of natural medicine reflecting the people's unshakeable concept of 'wholeness' and the way in which their lives are connected with natural forces. We can also see them using pots and bowls coloured and shaped exactly like the ones their ancestors used, as we can see in museums today. But the most immediate physical experience for the visitor is the closeness and the public nature of everyday life in the market. Pushing through and being pushed by crowds of people in a dazzling cloud of noises and smells, the visitor is actually walking right through the living-rooms of the merchants. Here they sleep, eat and socialize. There seems to exist very little privacy, and the swelling and ebbing tide of customers during the day provides them with the basic rhythms of their life.

The main fascination of Qingping Market for me was this glimpse of the way in which local people live according to rules and traditions often difficult for the visitor to grasp.

Josef Müller





TRAVEL NOTES

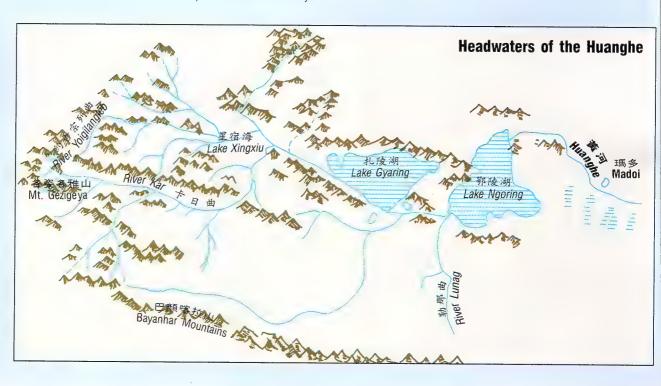
CAAC Flights

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Lanzhou — Xining	5	07:40	08:25	2201
Xining — Lanzhou	5	08:55	09:40	2143

Train Schedules Zhengzhou — Xi'an — Lanzhou — Xining

91 Exp.	275 F.T.	177/176 F.T.	121* F.T.	103/102* F.T.	Train No.	104/101* F.T.	122* F.T.	178/175 F.T.	276 F.T.	92 Exp.
		From Shanghai	From Beijing	From Qingdao		To Qingdao	To Beijing	To Shanghai		
	·	15:43	07:35	09:06	Zhengzhou	02:02	19:16	01:08		
		17:59	10:30	11:44	Luoyang	23:37	16:46	22:49		
		20:29	13:09	14:28	Sanmenxia	21:03	14:11	20:20		
		_ ·	17:52	19:12	Lintong	16:16	_	_		
	14:00	01:16	18:34	19:52	Xi'an	15:46	09:28	15:13	04:37	w .
	15:10	01:44	19:05	20:23	Xianyang	15:09	08:27	14:34	04:13	
	18:05	04:31	21:40	23:01	Baoji	12:44	06:09	11:58	01:44	
2.5 2.1%	22:13	08:05	01:23	02:45	Tianshul	08:50	02:40	08:00	21:34	
	01:53	10:50	04:14	05:57	Longxi	04:21	23:18	03:38	18:32	
15:18	06:43	15:46	08:37	10:02	Lanzhou	23:59	19:00	23:17	13:43	12:14
19:43	11:57	21:04	13:54	15:17	Xining	19:11	14:04	18:29	08:30	08:00

Exp. — Express
F.T. — Fast through passenger train
*denotes departure on alternate days



Average Climatic Conditions of Madoi County

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Temperature (°C)	-16.8	- 13.9	-8.3	-2.8	1.5	4.8	7.5	7.0	3.3	-3.2	-11.5	16.4
Rainfall (mm)	2.9	3.6	5.6	8.7	24.3	54.9	71.6	64.6	44.8	18.2	2.8	١.19



Lake Qinghai - paradise for birds (by Huang Jixian)

Where *Is* the Huanghe's Source?

The Huanghe is called the Maqu in Tibetan, ma being an abbreviation of mabja, meaning 'peacock', qu meaning 'river'. Maqu is thus the Peacock River, a name derived from the innumerable ponds of all sizes in the area. Seen from a distance (preferably from a high point), these shine like bright stars resembling the 'eyes' on a peacock's tail feathers.

It is generally believed that the source of the Huanghe was identified as far back as the Tang dynasty (618-907). In 1208 in the Yuan dynasty Du Shi, an explorer, was sent for the first time specifically to investigate the headwaters. The Qing dynasty also made a survey of the Huanghe's source. But none of these attempts went beyond Lake Xingxiu. The name for the latter in Tibetan is cocha, meaning a plain composed of large areas of marshlands with many small lakes.

During the last thirty years a lot of work has been done in connection with locating the real source of the Huanghe. At present, there are two different views. One body of opinion holds that the Huanghe is fed by multiple sources, namely the rivers Za, Yoigilanglêb and Kar. Others believe that, since the Kar is longer, its catchment area wider and its water volume greater, this should be regarded as the source. If this argument is true, then the Huanghe rises

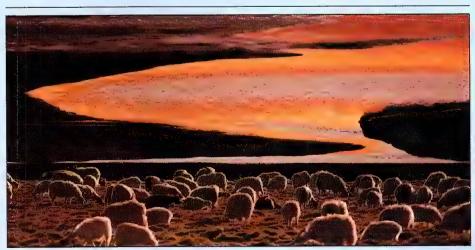
on the northern slopes of Mount Gezigeya in the Bayanhar Mountains.

Sister Lakes on the Grassland

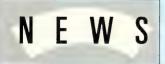
The marriage between King Songtsan Gambo, unifier of Tibet, and Princess Wencheng of the Tang dynasty 1,300 years ago is one of the best-loved stories among the peoples of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Legend has it that the young couple met for the first time beside Lake Baihai near the source of the Huanghe (Yellow River).

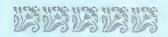
Baihai, meaning 'Tibet Lake', is a collective name for the lakes Gyaring and Ngoring. Since time immemorial Tibetans have lived and herded their yaks around these lakes. They named the one to the west Gyaring, meaning 'long white lake', the one to the east Ngoring, meaning 'long bluish-green lake'.

Located between A'nyemaqên and the Bayanhar Mountains, the lakes are over ten kilometres apart. Shaped like a gourd, Lake Ngoring has a surface area of 608 square kilometres, while the triangular Lake Gyaring covers 542 square kilometres. In the centre of the latter there is a island famous for its breeding colonies of water birds.



Lakeside pasture at Madoi (by Zhang Runguo)





In Memory of Confucius

September 28 1989 will be the 2,540th anniversary of the birth of Kong Qiu, Confucius (551-479 B.C.). The relevant tourism authorities intend to organize a series of programmes to commemorate the great teacher and sage, mainly based in Shandong Province. These will include the following:

 a Confucius Cultural Festival in Qufu, his birthplace, from September 26 to October 10. The opening ceremony will take place in front of the Confucius Temple (the oldest in the world). Interested participants, both Chinese and foreign, will be able to attend one-week courses on such subjects as the life of Confucius, his calligraphy, his paintings. Chinese dance, music and martial arts, the special cuisine of the Kong family, etc.; - rural tours around Qufu and nearby Zouxian;

 performances of dance and ancient music at Confucius temples in Beijing and Nanjing;
 a tour by car between Qufu and Urümqi, capital of Xinjiang in China's far north-west.



Quanzhou's Weiyuan Tower

The Weiyuan Tower in the ancient city of Quanzhou in Fujian Province is again open to the public following reconstruction. Under the Tang and Song dynasties it was known as Beilou (North Tower), but was given its present name during the Yuan dynasty. This latest reconstruction is sixteen metres high and covers more than 10,000 square metres. The complex also includes one hundred columns, forty-eight arcades, corridors, stele galleries, ponds, courtyards, etc.



Beijing's Grand View Garden

After four and a half years, the third phase of the Daguanyuan (Grand View Garden) has been concluded. The park based on the setting of the famous *A Dream of Red Mansions* is counted among Beijing's top twenty beauty spots. Situated in the southwest of the capital, it covers 12.5 hectares and features forty points of interest including Fragrant Tower, Happy Red Court and Bamboo Lodge.



Prehistoric Cave Dwelling

Archaeologists have found the ruins of a cave inhabited some 5,000 years ago in Benxi County, eastern Liaoning Province. They were able to identify a square kitchen and found pottery and a number of stone axes and household utensils carved with various patterns. In two nearby caves they discovered more axes, chisels and knives made of jade.



Kunming Dinosaur

A dinosaur skeleton 5.3 metres long has been unearthed at Xiyang, a township in the suburbs of Yunnan's capital, Kunming. The dinosaur, of a carnivorous type, and estimated to be somewhere around 170 million years old, sports a curious bony crest thirtyone centimetres long and eleven centimetres high on its skull. Xiyang has already yielded fossils from thirteen dinosaurs and more than six hundred dinosaur footprints.



Three Kingdoms Tour

The cities of Hanzhong, Baoji and Ankang in Shaanxi, Tianshui in Gansu, Chengdu in Sichuan and Xiangfan in Hubei have cooperated with a view to setting up a 'Three Kingdoms' Tour with Hanzhong as the base. The itinerary takes in a large number of relics and monuments associated with the Three Kingdoms — Wei, Shu and Wu — of the turbulent and exciting period of the same name between 220 and 280.



CYTS Tours in Nanning

China Youth Travel Service (CYTS) in Nanning, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is now offering tours which in their scope rival those available from the region's most famous beauty spot, Guilin.

A river cruise at Huashan offers karst scenery similar to that along the River Lijiang at Guilin, with the added bonus of 2,000-year-old cliff paintings. The Yiling Caves in Wuming County are ten times the size of Guilin's Reed Flute Cave. Add to this Nanning's very reasonable room rates and lower prices in general ... and you have an interesting tour destination. The airport is currently under expansion, and direct flights to and from Hong Kong should start later this summer.



Hunting Zone in Qinghai

The Balong Hunting Zone on the Qinghai Plateau is now open. It is located in Dulan County (Qagan Us) in central Qinghai Province at an altitude of more than 3,500 metres, and covers a radius of several hundred kilometres. This is the habitat of the Tibetan gazelle, wild sheep, etc., but it is also a wonderful place to enjoy the vast land-scapes of the high plateau and gain insights into the lifestyle of local nomadic tribes.



Sacred Music from Mount Wutai

This March saw a first for Hong Kong when a famous orchestra from Mount Wutai, the Buddhist holy mountain in northern Shanxi Province, was invited to give two concerts at Shatin. All the musicians are monks; the monasteries of Mount Wutai are said to produce the best Buddhist music in northern China. This type of music can be divided into two categories: aina miao (music of Han Chinese Buddhism) and huang miao (music of Tibetan Buddhism). It is played with wind, string and percussion instruments.



Stamps Galore!

1989 will see the issue of no less than twenty-two sets of commemorative and special stamps, a total of seventy stamps.

Already out are the 'Snake Year' stamp and a set of two on the brown-eared pheasant, a rare bird in China. In March, a set of three will appear on the theme of the marvellous polychrome painting on silk unearthed from a Han-dynasty tomb at Mawangdui, Changsha, in Hunan. April brings a set of four stamps illustrating the popular novel Outlaws of the Marsh, plus a set of two focusing on contributions to cancer prevention. Later in the year, in September, a set of two stamps will be issued to honour the 11th Asian Games which China is hosting in 1990, the fourth special set on this subject. And October boasts a third set based on the murals of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang in Gansu, this time featuring murals executed during the Sui dynasty (581-618).

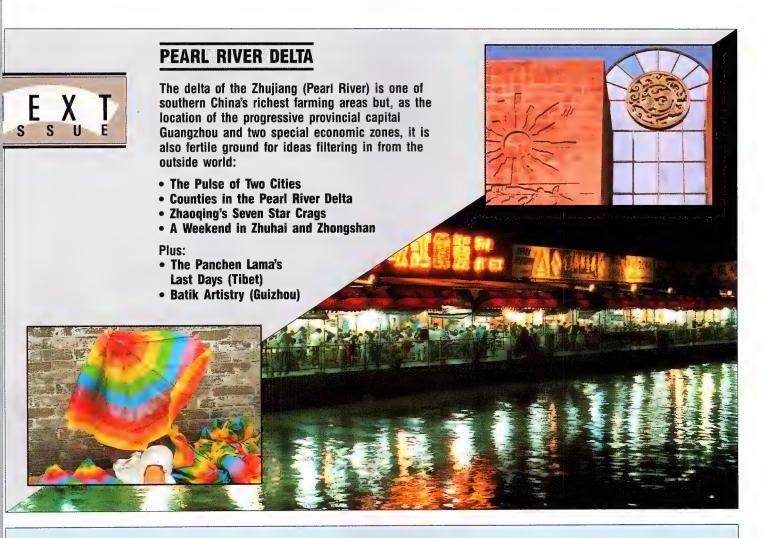
Other stamps appearing at unspecified dates throughout the year include two sets of land-scape stamps — one on the West Lake at Hangzhou, the other on Mount Huashan in southeastern Shaanxi — and four special stamps on China's ancient painted pottery.



Chinese Porcelain in India

Potsherds of fine Chinese porcelain dating back to the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) have been unearthed at three sites along the Malabar coast in India's southern state of Kerala. The porcelain included celadon and blue-and-white wares. A team of researchers from Japan is trying to uncover tangible evidence of trade between China and India between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Earlier finds of Chinese ceramics along this coast, which played an important role in East-West maritime trade along the so-called 'Silk Road of the Sea', belonged mostly to the later Ming and Qing periods of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.





Gansu Corridor Attractions

The Gansu Corridor, a flat, fertile strip of land between the desert and the mountains which runs from Lanzhou, capital of Gansu, northwest to Jiayuguan and beyond, was an important stretch of the Silk Road in ancient times. In addition to established tourist attractions such as the world-renowned Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang and sections of the Great Wall at Jiayuguan, one can now also explore the fascinating Mingin Botanical Garden of Desert Plants sixteen kilometres southwest of Mingin in the Tengger Desert, Another place worth a visit is the so-called 'Old Town of Dunhuang' at Mingsha Hill twenty kilometres outside Dunhuang which was constructed for the joint Sino-Japanese film TonKo. It consists of a collection of film sets showing the various locations in the Gansu Corridor covered in the film, which is set at the time of the Western Xia (1038-1227).



Luxury Express Trains

This year, China intends to expand its express services with luxury Pullman-type carriages specially designed for overseas visitors. Ten routes will be covered in 1989, including a 'Silk Road' route calling at such places as Xi'an and Dunhuang. Other destinations include Luoyang, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guilin and Guangzhou.

Other luxury expresses will operate on the short run between Beijing and Qinhuangdao in the northeast and between Shanghai, Suzhou and Wuxi in the southeast.

Some expresses will incorporate private carriages from special trains once reserved for Chinese leaders in the past, and even the exclusive carriage for Puyi, last emperor of the Qing dynasty, will be refurbished and pressed into service.



Snakes Alive?

In this Year of the Snake it has been reported that snakes are actually having a rough time of it in China. They are being killed in unprecedented numbers. Up to 400,000 pallas pit vipers are slaughtered every year and the number for non-venomous snakes, including rare and endangered species, is anything up to 50,000. If the killing is allowed to continue unchecked, experts are worried that the outcome may be an explosion in the rat population and disruption of the ecological balance.

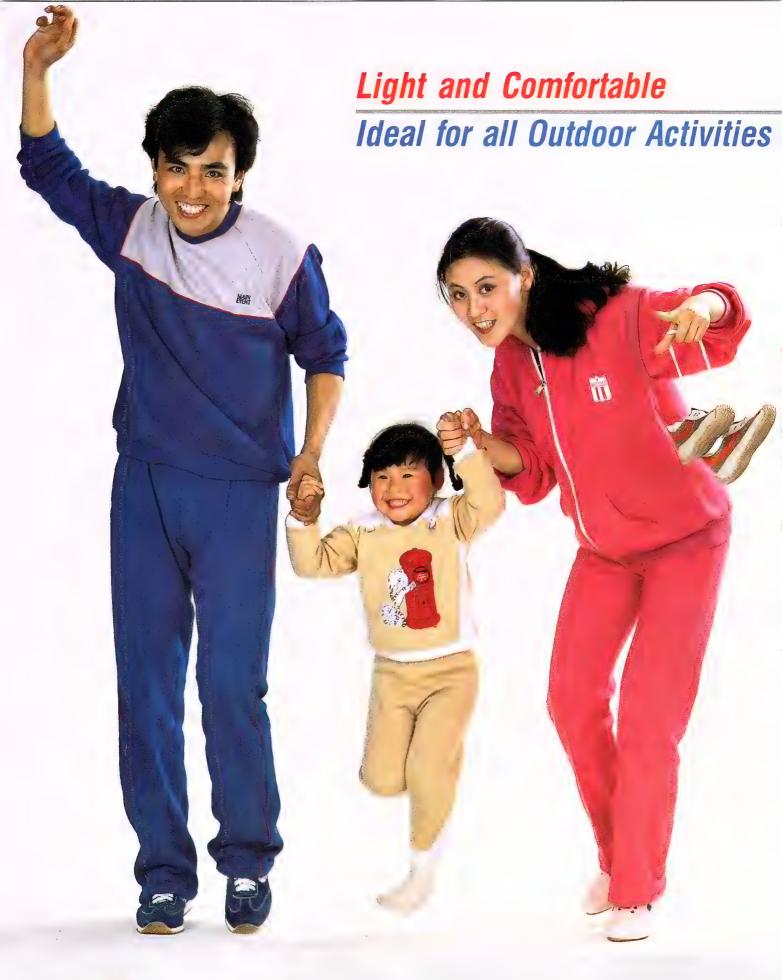
Members of the China Snakes Association have recommended a number of remedies, including a closed season to ensure reproduction, a state monopoly on production of snake venom. prohibition of large-scale trapping of snakes, and establishment of proper snake breeding and processing farms and snake reserves



Protection for Peking Man Site

Zhoukoudian, forty-eight kilometres southwest of Beijing, is famous as the place where a complete skull of Peking Man was discovered on December 2 1929. The limestone caves and crevices of the area provided an excellent habitat for this ancestor of mankind who lived from around 500,000 years ago.

The site had become endangered by the proliferation of limekilns, workshops and a fertilizer factory nearby. Following complaints from archaeologists about noise and smoke pollution after attempts by the authorities in 1983 and 1984 to combat the problem had remained without success, some of the offending factories have now been dismantled or closed. Fines have been imposed, and special regulations have been formulated to protect the site better.







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磷石塊

二氧化硅 規格: 砩化鈣

一級 85%以上 6%以下 二級 80%以上 8%以下 三級 75%以上 24%以下

粒度:0-25mm佔90%以上。

包装: 散裝。

用途:用於煉鋼,化工,陶瓷,玻璃,

煉鋁等工業。

FLUORSPAR IN LUMPS

Specification: SiO₂ CaF₂

> 6% max I 85% min II 80% min 8% max III 75% min 24% max

Size: Packing: Uses:

0-25 mm on 90% min.

In bulk.

Used in the industry of iron

fusing, chemistry, ceramic, glass and aluminium fusing, etc

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化學成份:三氧化二鋁 53-55% 碳酸鈣 32 - 35%

三氧化二鐵 3%以下 二氧化硅 7%以下

氧化鎂 1.5%以下

物理性能:細度(篩分析,通過80微米) 90%(最小)

初凝時間:40分(最小) 終凝時間:10小時

耐火度:>SK15(1430℃) **SM:** 500 # , 600 # , 700 #

HIGH ALUMINA CEMENT

Chemical content:

SiO₂ Al2O3 CaO Fe₂O₃ MgO 53-55% 32-35% 3% max 7% max 1.5% max

Physical properties:

Fineness (SWE analysis through 80m) 90% min. Initial setting time 40 minutes min. Final setting time 10 hours max. Pyrometric cone equiralent

>SK15 (1430°C) Size: No. 500/600/700



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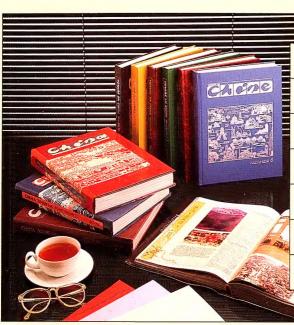
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